

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Divinity

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: EXPLORING EFFECTIVE MISSION STRATEGIES FOR REACHING OUT TO THE URBAN COMMUNITIES IN THE KWADASO DISTRICT, KUMASI, GHANA

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The Great Commission requires the Christian church to make disciples in all nations. According to the United Nations' Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects, 70% of the world's population will live in cities by 2050. Africa is currently seeing higher rates of urbanization than Asia and Latin America. By 2050, 1.2 billion people are predicted to live in cities. Ghana's urban population increased from 50.9% in 2010 to 56.7% in 2021, driven mostly by population growth in the Ashanti and Greater Accra regions. In 2022, Kumasi urban communities accounted for 58.62% of the Ashanti region's total population of 5,440,463. The UN predicts that the population of the Kumasi metro region will increase by 3.58% from 2022 to 3,903,000 by 2024.

Increased urbanization, rising secularization, and shifting socioeconomic patterns are common in many global cities, particularly in Africa. Kumasi, Ghana's fastest-growing city, is an excellent example of this fact. The Kwadaso area, located amid this expanding urban landscape, exemplifies the complex interplay of economic disparity, transient populations, technology influence, altering religious perspectives, and multiculturalism that characterizes modern urban centers.

Despite the Adventist Church's emphasis on mission, the Church in Kumasi has been strategically ineffective in its interactions with the community in recent years. The substantial gap between the Adventist community and the local populace is observable. This also points out that the church's current outreach tactics are unduly oriented toward metropolitan lives. The church runs the risk of becoming obsolete and stagnant in the absence of a clear, creative mission strategy that is adapted to the situation.

The study's objectives are to assess current mission tactics, pinpoint obstacles to success, and suggest mission techniques specific to Kwadaso's urban population. This study was founded on the Biblical Great Commission mandate to create a contextualized framework that will assist the church in reaching out to a varied variety of urban communities, increasing mission influence, and successfully addressing the spiritual and social needs of contemporary urban living.

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A Project

presented in partial fulfillment
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by

Adu Kwadwo

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To Him who is capable of accomplishing exceedingly and abundantly beyond all that we request or conceive, in accordance with the power that operates within us, be glory in the church through Christ Jesus; to Him this work is dedicated.

I dedicate this work also to the Central Ghana Conference
(CGHC) that supported me financially.

Again, I dedicate the work to my wife, Mary, and children.

Margaret, Josephine, and Melchizedek,
who supported me throughout
the study period with prayers
and encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rapid urbanization, which affects social, cultural, economic, and religious patterns, has drastically altered the dynamics of urban life throughout the world.¹ Secularization and migration are the main forces behind this trend.² The World Urbanization Prospects of the United Nations Population Division report that by 2050, 70% of the global population will reside in urban areas.³ Stephen de Beer observes that the rates of urbanization in Africa presently exceed those in Asia and Latin America. By 2050, 1.2 billion people are expected to reside in African cities.⁴ The urban population of Ghana rose from 50.9% in 2010 to 56.7% in 2021, primarily as a result of population growth in the Ashanti and Greater Accra regions.⁵ According to a study on urbanization in Ghana, the urban population expanded by 3.5 times between

¹ George Owusu and Paul W. K. Yankson, "Urbanization in Ghana: Retrospect and Prospects," in *The Economy of Ghana Sixty Years after Independence*, eds. Ernest Aryeetey and Ravi Kanbur (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 207-222, accessed 13 November 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198753438.003.0013>.

² Ibid.

³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision* (New York: United Nations, 2019), 34.

⁴ Stephan F. de Beer, "African Cities by 2063: Fostering Theologies of Urban Citizenship," *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022): a7924, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7924>.

⁵ Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 45.

1984 and 2010, indicating an emerging trend with major repercussions for the country's urban future.⁶

Urbanization marks a dramatic shift in how people cohabit and how city dwellers think, feel, and behave. Secularization, on the other hand, is another epochal occurrence that entails changes in how individuals perceive and understand their shared lives. Secularization arose when “urbanizers” defined, interpreted, and demonstrated the pluralistic issues of city life, aiming to change society and morality by removing lifestyle from the control or influence of religion.⁷ Recent urbanization, secularization, and scientific and technical advancements pose serious challenges to traditional religions, particularly missionary work.

In Africa, Christian urban ministry encounters difficulties such as cultural diversity and economic inequality. While modernity and secularism dominate young people's lives, factors such as instability and overcrowding make sustained engagement problematic. According to Cox, the rise of urban culture further complicates modern Christian missionary efforts in cities.⁸ Moreover, social exclusivity, affluent lifestyles, robust infrastructure, expanding interest in technology and social amenities, and first-rate leisure opportunities, particularly in sports, have hampered direct engagement with people. Poverty, high living costs, extremely fast-

⁶ Eli Gladson Yabani, "A Study of Balanced Ministry in Evangelism and Church Planting in the Urban areas of Ghana," (M. thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001), 39.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cox, *The Secular City*. The ways men live their common life affects mightily the ways they understand the meaning of that life, and vice versa. Villages and cities are laid out to reflect the pattern of the heavenly city, the abode of the gods. But once laid out, the pattern of the polis influences the way in which succeeding generations experience life and visualize the gods. Societies and the symbols by which those societies live influence each other. In our day the secular metropolis stands as both the pattern of our life together and the symbol of our view of the world. If the Greeks perceived the cosmos as an immensely expanded polis, and medieval man).

paced activities, a very stressful life, and significant traffic interruptions are among the horror stories.

Kumasi, Ghana's second-largest city and trade hub, has its fair share of urbanization and its inborn population upsurge. According to Ghana's 2021 population census, out of the Ghanaian population of 30,832,019, the Kumasi metro area has 3,490,000, a 4.24% increase from the 2020 count. In the Ashanti region, the proportion of Kumasi urban communities alone in 2022 was 58.62% of the territory's population of 5,440,463.⁹ The UN estimates that the population of the Kumasi metro region will grow by 3.58% from the 2022 figure, reaching 3,903,000 by 2024.¹⁰ This challenge is not only for the government but also for the religious community. The social portrait of Kumasi encompasses people from all cities and towns across Ghana, as well as neighboring countries, Togo, the Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and others worldwide. Residents can be categorized as wealthy, well-off, struggling, and impoverished, with the latter being the majority.

Again, these residents comprise multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious groups and individuals. The low-income majority, aged between twenty-five and fifty-five, are the informal sector workers, unemployed people, and daily income earners with dependent families. This group has been the largest among the city's homeless population. According to Shorter, for the church and her mission, planting churches in urban areas is crucial. However, the church and Christian missions face new and complicated challenges in urban settings. A study on the establishment of urban churches in Africa states, "Cities have proliferated in the 20th century. With their

⁹ Ghana Statistical Service, *Population of Regions and Districts: 2021 Population and Housing Census, General Report Vol. 3A* (Accra, Ghana: Ghana Statistical Service, November 18, 2021), 5.

¹⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Urbanization Prospects*.

accompanying materialism and secularism, urbanization and modernization have emerged as prominent aspects of our era.”¹¹

Historically, the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) has struggled with an anti-city mission bias.¹² In the past, the church failed to meet the mission needs of cities in many parts of the world and instead focused on rural areas. In 2013, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) held a conference dubbed "It's Time: Refocusing Adventist Urban Mission for the 21st Century."¹³ To promote the above initiative, in 2014, McEdward and Trim analyzed the 500 largest cities worldwide to assess the urban presence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, focusing on the ratio of membership to population.¹⁴ Kumasi was among the cities surveyed.

The study revealed that the Seventh-day Adventist population in these large cities is substantially low, with a population-to-member ratio of 547.7:1, equivalent to 1,826 members per million (1,000,000) people in the general population.¹⁵ In this context, all well-meaning Adventists became conscious of the need for an urban mission. Rik Pinxten and Ellen Preckler observed that the Adventist Church may need to re-examine how it has responded to issues regarding how people cope with city

¹¹ Aylward Shorter, *The Church and Her Mission in Africa: The Way Forward for the 1990s* (Nairobi, Kenya: St. Paul Publications–Africa, 1991), 1-2.

¹² Bruce L. Bauer, “The Challenge of Urban Mission,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 15, no. 1 (2019): vi.

¹³ Rick McEdward, and D. J. B. Trim, “Reaching the World’s 500 Largest Cities: A Demographic and Statistical Analysis,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 10, no. 2 (2014): 1-20, <https://dx.doi.org/10.32597/jams/vol10/iss2/2/>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

life, define the quality of life, and learn trajectories about values and the meaning of life embedded in true religion.¹⁶

Several decades ago, public campaigns in Kumasi drew big crowds, much to the surprise and admiration of many evangelists. For example, in 2000, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kumasi, Ghana, launched an evangelism program called ACTS 2000. It was an intentional urban evangelism campaign. After the campaign, the main speaker, Pastor Mark Finley, a renowned SDA pastor/evangelist, retorted, "I was amazed that 5000 people exposed to the elements would sit spellbound, listening to the Word of God."¹⁷ Kofi Owusu-Mensa also says, "If God is not remembered in Akan land for anything, it is for His day of worship, Saturday, the seventh and last day of the Akan week."¹⁸ The culture and traditions of Kumasi's indigenous people, the Akans, resonate well with the Seventh-day Adventists' Sabbath belief.¹⁹ However, rising urbanization, secularism, and societal shifts have negatively affected these positions and traditional ways of sharing and receiving the gospel in Kumasi. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kumasi, Ghana, is impacted by these problems.

In 2022, the West Central African Division of the church (WAD) evaluated its field conferences' mission performances. The ten-year check indicated that the Central Ghana Conference (the conference under study) grew from 1.47% in 2012 to 7.43% in 2022. The churches and companies in the conference, including those in

¹⁶ Rik Pinxten and Lisa Dikomitis, *When God Comes to Town*, vol. 4 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), xi.

¹⁷ Mark Finley, "Great Challenges- Great Miracles!" *Adventist Review*, June 24, 1999, 11.

¹⁸ Kofi Owusu-Mensa, *Saturday God and Adventism in Ghana* (New York: Peter Lane, 1993), 36.

¹⁹ Robert Osei-Bonsu, "Sabbath Observance among the Akan's of Ghana and Its Impact on the Growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry* 7 (2013): 3-26.

Kumasi, have experienced slow performance over the decade. The highest rate reported was 7.81% in 2016.²⁰ The 2016 peak may have been a transitory surge rather than a long-term increasing trend. The slow performance was attributed to the non-reception of mission activities in the cities. It suggested that a new mission strategy was urgently required, particularly in metropolitan regions that are supposed to have high missionary potential. This strategy should focus on urban ministry while simultaneously affecting other communities.

Statement of Problem

The Christian church is required by the Great Commission to make disciples in every nation, including the rapidly growing and diverse urban populations of the twenty-first century. However, accelerated urbanization, growing secularization, and changing socioeconomic structures are prevalent in many global cities, especially in Africa. Ghana's fastest-growing city, Kumasi, is a prime example of these facts. Located within this growing urban landscape, the Kwadaso district reflects the complex interplay of economic inequality, transient populations, technological influence, shifting religious attitudes, and multiculturalism that define modern urban centers.

Despite the Adventist Church's focus on mission, the Church in Kumasi has been strategically inadequate in its interactions with the residents. This illustrates the great disparity (gap) between the number of Adventists and the population of the community. The current mission strategies of the church appear to be subordinated to the urban lifestyles of the people. Consequently, in the absence of a clearly defined,

²⁰ West-Central Africa Division of the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, "Refocusing on Mission: Secretary's Report," in *2022 Year-End Council* (Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire: West-Central Africa Division, November 2022), 36.

context-specific, and innovative mission strategy, the Church is at risk of becoming irrelevant and stagnant. The objectives of this study are to assess current mission strategies, identify the problems impeding successful missions, and propose contextualized mission strategies that are adapted to the urban populations of Kwadaso.

Research Questions

1. What are the existing mission strategies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kumasi City?
2. What factors hinder successful urban missionary work in Kumasi City?
3. What mission strategies could be proposed for the urban ministry in the Kwadaso urban district of Kumasi?
4. What biblical and theological principles underpin the new strategy?

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to analyze the Seventh-day Adventist Church's existing mission strategies in the Kwadaso District of Kumasi, Ghana; evaluate the hindrances to successful urban outreach in this growing, urbanizing, and secularizing environment; and propose mission strategies that are appropriate for the sociocultural, economic, and religious dynamics of the communities. This study was based on the Biblical Great Commission mandate to provide a contextualized framework that will help the church reach out to a diverse range of urban populations, increase its mission influence, and effectively address the spiritual and social needs of modern urban life.

Research Objectives

1. Identify the Seventh-day Adventist Church's current mission and outreach strategies in Kumasi's Kwadaso District.

2. To investigate the sociocultural, economic, and religious factors impeding effective urban missionary work in Kwadaso urban communities.
3. To determine the extent to which current mission strategies address the spiritual and social needs of Kwadaso's diverse urban population.
4. To identify and propose contextually appropriate mission strategies to enhance the Seventh-day Adventist Church's outreach in the Kwadaso district.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the insights it offers the Central Ghana Conference (CGC) to enhance its urban ministry strategic plan. The results of the urban mission in Kumasi have fallen short of expectations in soul-winning and long-term discipleship, despite huge financial investments. To improve mission results within the conference, this study examines existing strategies.

Second, by offering theologically sound, culturally sensitive, and contextually relevant mission strategies for modern urban ministry, the study can inspire and revitalize pastors, elders, departmental leaders, and church members. Numerous religious leaders have grown more disheartened and disengaged from their mandates in the Kwadaso church and the surrounding Kumasi zone.

Third, the Mid-Ghana Union Conference and five other Adventist conferences in Kumasi that deal with comparable urban mission issues stand to benefit from the study's conclusions. The study's findings can be used to model more general applications in the metropolitan area by conducting missions in populations with parallel migration and socioeconomic patterns.

Finally, by highlighting the appropriateness of mission strategies for a diverse and growing population, the study supports the General Conference's (GC) global

urban mission goal. To support the objective of reviving the Adventist church's presence in urban centers like Kumasi, sustainable mission strategies for Kwadaso can improve the church's urban engagement worldwide.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by its qualitative design and small sample size, which restrict generalization beyond the Kwadaso District. Time and resource constraints also limited the scope of longitudinal assessment.

Delimitation of the Study

This research focused solely on the Central Ghana Conference, even though Kumasi hosts five additional Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) conferences. Again, the Central Ghana Conference covers eight districts in the metropolitan region; only one was chosen for the study: Kwadaso District. The district was selected based on the following criteria: (I) regularity of mission activities, (II) hosting the headquarters church, (III) possessing more resources and members, (IV) a high number of missionaries, and (V) the subject under investigation has captured the interest of this headquarters church's stakeholders.

Methodology

This part of the study pertains to the research approach and design, the population, the sampling strategy, data collection, analysis, and ethical issues.

Research Approach and Design

This study employs a qualitative research methodology on phenomenological ideals to analyze the real-life experiences of persons involved in urban ministry.

Focus groups and individuals participated in both structured and unstructured

interviews, answering closed-ended and open-ended questions, and findings will be compared to documentary review.

Population and Sampling

Two focus groups, one from the church and one outside the church, were engaged. Each group comprises 3 individuals. Again, 4 individual stakeholders were interviewed.

Data Collection, Procedure, and Analysis

This study is largely concerned with gathering and interpreting data using research procedures. Data is collected by note-taking or audio recording.

Ethical Consideration

The entire research process, from study design to data reporting, involves ethical concerns. To protect privacy, anonymity will be used to ensure fairness and confidentiality. Before doing anything sensitive, participants' permission will be asked. In any case, they must be able to choose to participate and back out at any time.

Definitions of Terms

To ensure a clear and correct understanding, dictionary definitions and contextual explanations of the terms used in this study are essential. Rather than just improving comprehension, this approach increases the pleasure and educational value of reading. Consequently, the following terms are being examined.

District: The Word Web dictionary defines the word "district" as a region marked off for administrative or other purposes.²¹ In Ghana, a "district" is a second-level administrative unit under the regional-level administration. However, the SDA church in Ghana organizes its administrative districts differently from those of the central government. The Central Ghana Conference organizes several churches in communities nearby to form a district. For example, the Kwadaso district has six churches. This study focuses on the district approved by the S.D.A. church.

Ministry: The word "ministry," according to Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, means "to wait on" or "serve."²² In the framework of this research, the word "ministry" connotes the "work or activity" to be done by the church. The church's ministry, therefore, includes teaching, preaching, casting out demons, healing, providing the physical needs of individuals and communities, etc.

Mission strategy is a deliberate set of activities that the church uses to carry out outreach, discipleship, and community transformation under the direction of biblical, theological, and contextual reflection.

Mission: The word "mission," according to the English Learner's Dictionary, is a special assignment given to a person or group. Or, an organization of missionaries in a foreign land to carry on religious work. Or, the organized work of a religious missionary.²³ However, in the context of this research, the word "mission" is the "task" of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to those to whom the church is sent

²¹ *The Word Web Dictionary*, S.Y. "district," accessed 13 November 2024, <https://www.wordwebonline.com/en/DISTRICT>.

²² Chad Brand, Eric Mitchell, and Holman Reference Editorial Staff, "Ministry," *The Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman, 2003), 1134.

²³ *The English Learner's Dictionary*, S.Y. "mission," accessed 13 November 2024, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/mission?q=mission>.

(urban dwellers in our case) in any strategic form possible to promote God's plan of redemption.

Secularization is the process through which people adopt secular or pluralistic worldviews while religious organizations, practices, and beliefs lose their social significance and influence.

Strategy: According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a "strategy" is a thorough plan for obtaining victory in situations such as war, politics, business, industry, or sport or the ability to plan for such events. It also explains the word further as "a long-range plan for achieving something or a goal, or the skill of making such a plan."²⁴ In this research, the word "strategy" is used to imply an approach or planned program to reach the people in the community.

The Church: In the Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, the term "church" refers to the Christian community, both locally (a specific congregation) and globally (the universal church).²⁵ It can also refer to a building used for Christian worship. The dictionary has more detailed definitions regarding several faiths in historical settings. However, in this study, the term "church" refers specifically to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Urban: The Word Web dictionary defines "urban" as an adjective relating to or concerned with a city or densely populated area. For example, "urban development." According to the dictionary, the word "urban" implies "located in" or "characteristic of a city or city life."²⁶ For example, "urban affairs" and "urban

²⁴ *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2020), s.v. "strategy."

²⁵ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (2006), s.v. "church."

²⁶ *The Word Web Dictionary*, s.v. "urban," accessed 13 November 2024, <https://www.wordwebonline.com/en/DISTRICT>.

manners." Essentially, the word's usage in this study follows the same dictionary definition. For instance, "urban ministry" in this research context refers to sharing the gospel or conducting missionary activities in a large city or densely populated area.

Urbanization: The process through which a growing percentage of people reside in cities and urban areas is known as urbanization, and it causes changes in social structure, economic activity, land use, religion, and culture.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Old and New Testaments of the Bible reveal divine plans, which form the basis of urban ministry. As the term "urban" has been used since Old Testament times, the potential and difficulties of missions in the city are made abundantly evident in the Bible. While the New Testament views Jesus' urban ministry as an example for apostolic and contemporary missionary work, the Old Testament focuses on God's relationship with cities. Ellen G. White also was a prolific writer on urban ministries.

Despite prevailing negative views of ancient cities, the Bible portrays them as significant for divine work, focusing on themes of oppression, divine plans, and the church's role in spreading the Gospel, particularly in adherence to the Great Commission. This chapter examines the above biblical positions and concludes it with thoughts from Ellen G. White.

Old Testament Perspective

The Bible's first mention of a "city" is found in Genesis 4:17, where Cain built a city for his son, Enoch. According to Jacques Ellul, the motive behind the building of a city depicts man's rebellious heart. It also represents man's final rejection of God. He believes the Bible prioritizes fellowship with the Savior in the transfigured city rather than a willingness to return to an Eden-type of city. For him, the city's history, from Cain, Nimrod, and Babylon to Jerusalem, indicates a predisposition that

seeks to destroy human beings through human works.¹ Urban ministry in the Old Testament: God chose the city as a means of grace to believers.

In reflecting on an urban mission for the twenty-first century, Fujino and Co. contend that Old Testament cities, such as Jericho, Gibeon, Ai, Nineveh, and Babylon, showed disobedience toward Israel and God. They express that Babylon and Rome represent world empires or spiritual forces that oppose God's kingdom.² Jerusalem was chosen as a center for Gentile amalgamation (Acts 15:1-31), a place of salvation and justice, and a sanctuary for murderers.

The Babylonian captivity in Daniel (4:27) and Jeremiah (29:7) emphasized the importance of seeking the well-being of Jerusalem. Later, the Psalms regularly stress that the people should wish the best for Jerusalem, the sacred city (Ps. 9; 51; 60; 12:31-132). DuBose observes that towns in the Old Testament were considered (1) sanctuaries of refuge (Numb. 35:26; Josh. 20:1-7), (2) attractive places to dwell (Psalm 122:1-9), (3) places of worship (Psalm 48:1-2), and (4) locations of God's presence (Isaiah 60:14).³ These cities were significant locales where God and the people gave special attention. In this light, the biblical command to "missionize" urban communities could be viewed as an essential initiative by God from ancient times rather than a necessity for the modern world's population shift.

¹ Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 45.

² Gary Fujino, Timothy R. Sisk, and Tereso C. Casino, eds. *Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-first Century*, vol. 20 (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing, 2012), 20.

³ Francis M. DuBose, *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1983), 45.

Old Testament Examples of Urban Mission

The City of Sodom and Gomorrah. The biblical narrative of the conversation between Abraham and the Lord about the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18:16-33) indicates God's concern for the affairs of urban communities. The story relates to the Genesis flood and Noah's before-flood ministry, in which God demonstrated compassion for human existence a hundred and twenty years before their doom (Gen. 6:1-4). According to Genesis 6:5, God "saw" human evil, including emotional drives and inclinations. Similarly, while looking down on Sodom from the Judean mountains, the Lord "saw" the city's depravity and told Abraham what He would do (Gen. 18:17-19). The revelations above emphasize God's saving nature as trustworthy and one who cares about the affairs of the cities. He would undoubtedly reveal his special intentions before acting. "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7 NKJ).

The Lord's forbearance in allowing Abraham to postpone His judgment for the sake of a few righteous people from 50, 45, 40, 30, 20, and eventually 10 demonstrates His patience and compassion with city inhabitants. Genesis 18:21, the words of the Lord: "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know," echoing countless times the concept of God's concern, justice, and the relational character of interaction with humans as well as the significance of thorough investigation before judgment.⁴

Furthermore, the passage stresses that Abraham started to intercede for Sodom (Gen 18:23-33). Essentially, the intercession of Abraham was a marker of mission in

⁴ Angel Manuel Rodriguez, Daniel Kwame Bediako, Carl P. Cosart, and Gerald A. Klingbeil, *Andrews Bible Commentary*, International ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022), 163u.

the cities. The Lord engaged with him concerning the salvation and destruction of wicked men. Abraham instructed his family about God's authority and justice while simultaneously acting as a missionary to humanity in the urban communities. Abraham had been promised that his children would be a mighty nation (Genesis 18:18), and he needed to grasp the complexities of the cities through God's eyes. He was to acquire attention, care, and a willingness to minister to those in the metropolises (Gen. 19:1-28). He watched the city from the mountaintop with the Lord and the angels.⁵ In his commentary on Genesis 18, Gerald A. Klingbeil observes that the conversation between Abraham and the Lord was intentional because God wanted Abraham to learn to serve the cities and to be a blessing for their inhabitants (v. 19). Thus, 'to keep the way of the LORD' involves doing what is right and just and indicates metaphorically right behavior leading to a way of salvation."⁶

According to Angel Manuel Rodriguez and Co., Genesis 18:22, Abraham's "standing before God" has startling theological ramifications and foreshadows God's readiness to save humanity—even at the point of death (Matthew 20:28). "God's attitude to service invited Abraham to become an intercessor."⁷ This conversation and appraisal from the Lord revealed how the Lord influenced Abraham to intercede for the morally corrupt people in the city. Therefore, God Himself involved Abraham in the discussion, and he (Abraham) also joined in and based his argument on God's righteousness (Gen 18:25). From a straightforward perspective, the city was considered graceful in light of its impending doom.

⁵ Angel Manuel Rodriguez, Daniel Kwame Bediako, Carl P. Cosart, and Gerald A. Klingbeil, *Andrews Bible Commentary*, International ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022), 163.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 163-164.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

Again, it seems likely that Lot and his family (relatives of Abraham) were at the heart of Abraham's appeal to God to save the city. In consequence, he was basically interceding for the entire metropolitan community: "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: suppose ten (righteous people) should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten" (Gen 18:32). God's answer demonstrated that indiscriminate retribution is not divine judgment. When the Lord ended the discourse with Abraham, He established His justice and righteousness. The city's destruction was a reminder to the near and far metropolises that God's watchful eyes were watching all men anywhere (Deut. 29:14-23; Isa. 1:1-4, 3:8-9, 13:17-22; Jer. 23:9-15, 49:14-18, 50:35-45; Lam. 4:6, 11; Ezek. 4:11-13; Zeph. 2:5-9; Matt. 10:11-15, 11:21-24; Luke 17:28-30; 2 Pet. 2:4). Klingbeil comments in Genesis 18:19 that the advice to Lot to leave the city to protect himself and his family from destruction stemmed from Abraham's hospitality to those visitors (vv. 1-5). Lot repeated the same gesture to open the way of salvation to his in-laws and others (Gen 19:1-3, 12-22). Therefore, any move in ministry opens the door for others to interact with the Lord.

Mission in Nineveh. The Book of Jonah is another Old Testament narrative that describes the urban mission of the prophet Jonah to the notoriously evil city of Nineveh. The divine plan to save urban populations was made clear when God told Jonah, "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are" (Jonah 1:1-2). Jonah's initial hesitation nearly cost him his life. After his subsequent actions, the city turned from its sins, and God spared it from destruction. Accordingly, one is not far off the mark to refer to the book of Jonah as "Jonah and urban ministry." The book of Jonah

has a more profound theology than its length and simplicity would indicate.⁸ The narrative highlights three themes that illustrate God's redemptive plan: God's sovereignty, God's compassion, and the carnal motive of humanity. It summarizes that God has authority over all creation, yet where there is no hope, He gives hope (1:4, 17; 2:10; 4:6-8).⁹ Significantly, everything created obeys God. He also demonstrates His sovereignty as a judge. However, the sovereign judge is also compassionate. Eventually, Nineveh was saved from destruction when God's word (mission work) was preached there, just as God used the fish to prevent Jonah from drowning (1:2, 17; 2:10; 3:4). God's plan has always been to use His chosen people to reach the world (Ezek. 3:1-25; 2 Cor. 5:20). However, like Jonah, God's people have misconceptions toward unbelievers and sinners.

Jonah initially refused to go to Nineveh to protest its wickedness, instead choosing to flee to Tarshish (Jon 1:3). This disobedience brought to light God's salvific motive for the city; as commanded, a fish swallowed Jonah and threw him into the arid region of Nineveh. According to the Andrews Bible Commentary: International Edition, understanding the role of the fish in the book provides an intriguing insight into God's immutable saving grace, even if it saves sinners the hard way.¹⁰ God's people's attitude to lost souls is, at certain times, divinely unsupported. In Jonah 3:5-10, Jonah preached to the city, and the people repented from their wickedness. "So, the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on

⁸ Angel Manuel Rodriguez, Daniel Kwame Bediako, Carl P. Cosart, and Gerald A. Klingbeil, *Andrews Bible Commentary*, International ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022), 1102.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1103.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1105.

sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them” (Jon 3:5). As a result, God relented on His intention and offered salvation by grace through the Ninevites' faith.

Nonetheless, Jonah opposed God's redemptive grace for the city. In response, God demonstrated His grace to him by using a plant and asking the clearest missionary question ever, indicating why mission in the cities is critical. But the Lord said, “You have pitied the plant for which you have not labored nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left-- and much livestock?” (Jon 4:10-11 NKJ).

According to the question, God intends to give the urban dwellers a "second chance." He wants the metropolitan communities to be warned of their sins. His greatest concern was the potential of salvation for anyone who chose to turn to Him. He spared Nineveh because they repented and turned away from their sins. God loves sinners but despises sin and constantly provides them with the opportunity to change their ways. Abraham's calling, response, and intercession for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah played a role in giving a lifeline to the cities.

Considering the two narratives from the Old Testament, it is seen that city ministry is important to God. He allowed Abraham to intercede and negotiate, showcasing His mercy and willingness to permit His chosen people to minister in His saving plan to the wicked. However, he also intended to demonstrate his justice and the consequences of wickedness by destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. This incident is a powerful reminder of God's judgment and compassion. The church's response to Jesus Christ's "Great Commission" (Matt 28:18-20, cf. 24:20) is critical to saving people anywhere, particularly in cities and urban areas. This necessitates the church

using all possible strategies and instruments to reach out to people significantly influenced by city life. The Lord is kind, compassionate, and just to everyone, especially those in cities and urban centers globally.

New Testament Perspective

Jesus and Urban Ministry

Jesus had a burden for urban ministry, and this was demonstrated by the “Messianic procession into the Holy City, Jerusalem,” and the lamentation against the city: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen *gathers* her brood under *her* wings, but you were not willing! (Luke 13:34 NKJ; Matt 21:1-11; Luke 9:51ff; John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 10:22; 12:12). Jesus lamented that Jerusalem “kills prophets” and “stones those sent to her,” citing the city’s history of rejecting God’s messengers. He used the metaphor of a hen gathering her brood to show that He truly wanted to save His people, but they consistently disregarded His calls for repentance. The main charge, “But you were not willing,” highlights their continued refusal to accept the Savior and obey God’s instructions.

He preached among the large cities of Decapolis (Mark 7:31-37; Matt. 4:23-25). His zeal to evangelize individuals regardless of their locale was exemplified by His travels across towns and villages (Matt. 9:35, Acts 1:8). Describing Jesus’ method for mission, Ellen G. White gave this insightful and famous statement: “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then he bade them, “Follow me.”¹¹ This often-

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1905), 143.

quoted statement has significant implications for how Jesus drew groups and individuals to Himself in cities and rural areas. This has become a model for urban ministries.

According to Glenn Smith, Christ's method was "contextualization." Thus, "weaving together." The word draws attention to the function of context in theological endeavors. Starting a ministry with doctrinal or sectarian biases may not be beneficial. In a real sense, any doctrinal reflection was tied to the situation from which it emerged, addressing the aspirations, concerns, goals, and needs.¹² One clear example of that was Jesus' demonstration in the story recorded in Luke, concerning a widow who had lost her son.

Jesus and His disciples went to the village of Nain, where a big crowd followed them. As he approached the village gate, a funeral procession with several mourners in sympathy appeared. The young boy who had died was the widow's only son. When Christ saw the deceased's mother (a widow), His heart was filled with compassion. He said, "Don't cry!" Then he walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped. "Young man," he said, "I tell you, get up." Then the dead boy sat up and began to talk. Jesus gave him back to his mother. Great fear swept the crowd, and they praised God, saying, "A mighty prophet has risen among us," and "God has visited his people today" (Luke 7:11-13). The word about Jesus spread throughout Judea and its surroundings.

Jesus spent time getting closer to the widow who had lost her only son and the mourners. This signifies the first step in His mission, "mingling with the people as one who desired their good." The move was to have an entrance into their hearts, their

¹² Glenn Smith, "The Challenges of Urban Mission," accessed 12 March 2025, <https://www.ywamcity.org/challenges-of-urban-missions>.

life, and their world. He identified Himself with them against cultural and religious biases (John 4:1-26; 9:19-29). He sympathized with the widow, using comforting and sensitive words: “Don’t cry.” According to Walter L. Liefeld, Luke's account of the Lord Jesus' sympathy for the destitute widow was genuinely humane.¹³ Liefeld emphasizes that getting closer to people at their roots helps to win their confidence. He could not only say, "Don't cry," but also remove the source of the anguish and tears. Mere words could not have resonated enough. Jesus walked over to the coffin, disregarding tradition and defiling rituals by touching the coffin and speaking to a dead person, and commanded, “Young man, I say to you, arise" (Luke 7:14-15 NKJ).¹⁴

The approach of Jesus transformed circumstances and urged the church to overcome prejudices and barriers in reaching out to individuals. By connecting with people in urban slums and empathizing with their diverse backgrounds—including poverty, lifestyle, education, and culture—needs are identified and addressed. Jesus' words, "Don't cry," were matched by His action of raising the boy from the dead. Roger S. Greenway and Timothy M. Monsma assert that the life and work of Jesus Christ provide an answer to what is commonly thought of as a Christian conundrum.¹⁵

¹³ Walter L. Liefeld, “Luke,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 8:899.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 899.

¹⁵ Roger S. Greenway and Timothy M. Monsma, *Cities: Missions’ New Frontier* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 171. Quoted in Eliazar Daila Baba, “Jesus’ Methods of Communicating the Gospel: Its Implications for the Missionaries Today,” *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education* 9, no. 8 (2022): 130. Emphasis mine. Roger S. Greenway, *Go and Make Disciples: An Introduction to Christian Missions* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1999), 171. David Lowes Watson affirms Greenway and Monsma’s statement by saying that “Clearly the proclamation of the gospel is not all that the church does as it engages in God’s mission to the world. Good works are as much a part of that mission as the announcement of God’s salvation.” David Lowes Watson, “A Praxis Approach to Evangelism: Reflections on the Realities of Contemporary Evangelical Outreach,” in *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 58.

Jesus' ministry is a model that unites the mission of the church with social responsibility. His love and compassion for people, viewed as God's image-bearers affected by sin, guided His concern for their physical needs. His healing ministry complemented His preaching, reflecting a blend of temporal and eternal aspects of human existence. His healing ministry bridges His preaching ministry.¹⁶

Therefore, as recorded by Luke, the crowd experienced great fear and praised God, acknowledging Jesus as a mighty prophet. His ministry's success stemmed from his varied strategies to connect with diverse audiences, underscoring the importance of adapting outreach methods in urban centers to effectively share the Gospel.¹⁷ J. D. Douglas suggests that Jesus' primary purpose was to reach the masses. He sought out the people wherever they were, whether in the synagogue, the streets, or the lakeside.¹⁸ According to Robert E. Coleman, Christ not only recognized His audience, but He also understood their background and situations.¹⁹ Modern urban ministry cannot ignore this understanding.

While bent on announcing the nearness of the kingdom of God, Christ mostly spent quality time with His audience to meet their needs. Although the people's reaction was not always positive (Mark 5:1-18 [9]; Luke 4:16-30 [30]; John 6:22-67 [66-67]). In healing the widow's son, Jesus used an approach that easily caught the attention of His audience. Dennis Mock terms this approach of Jesus "the lecture-

¹⁶ Roger S. Greenway and Timothy M. Monsma, *Cities: Missions' New Frontier* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 171.

¹⁷ Eliazar Daila Baba, "Jesus' Methods of Communicating the Gospel: Its Implications for the Missionaries Today," *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education* 9, no. 8 (2022): 129.

¹⁸ J. D. Douglas, *New International Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Corporation, 1987), 206.

¹⁹ Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1998), 78.

discourse approach.” Thus, it uses different methods to effectively communicate a message to the right people at the right time.²⁰

According to Watson, Jesus' concern was to make the gospel message apparent in its essence and fullness.²¹ He observes that Jesus taught his audience using long and short discourses to convey significant truth. His long discourses included the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24-25), and the Upper Room Discourse with the disciples (John 13-17). He highlights that Jesus methodically gave multiple brief sermons of the Gospels to meet people's needs, respond to questions, deal with issues, uphold the truth, and refute the false doctrines of the law teachers (Matt. 23:17).²² His teachings, miracles, parables, and above all, His lifestyle, were how He won the people's hearts and delivered the good news to them. From the Teaching Techniques for Church Education, Baba observes that Jesus

²⁰ Dennis J. Mock, *Teaching Principles and Methods: Course Manual*, Course no. 8. (Atlanta, GA: International Bible Society, 1984), 57-58.

²¹ Watson, “A Praxis Approach to Evangelism,” 158.

²² Baba, “Jesus’ Methods of Communicating the Gospel,” 132. It is numerous seen in the Gospels that Jesus employed a question-answer kind of communication tool. His many questions asked when ministering were ways through which He delivered the gospel to the people. Some few references are below and reflect the nature of the question.

- a. Caused people to think- “Dear woman, why do you involve me?” (John 2:4)
- b. Correct misunderstanding- “You are Israel’s teacher, and you do not understand these things?” (John 3: 10)
- c. Clarify confusion- “Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven, or to say, get up and walk?’” (Luke 5:23)
- d. Confront error- “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do well or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” (Mark 3:4)
- e. Create interest- “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” (Mark 16: 13)
- f. Create background for teaching- “What did Moses command you?” (Mark 10:3)
- g. Emphasize a truth- “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?” (Matt. 16:26)
- h. Suggest appropriate application- “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” (Luke 10: 36) I.) Drew people into the learning experience- “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?” (Matt. 7:9). Thus, questions were an important aspect of Jesus’ teaching methods. He used it to initiate interest and gain the attention of His audience.

was a master storyteller. His stories were unsurpassed as models of character painting using action and the spoken word.²³

In conclusion, Jesus approached ministry, particularly in urban centers, by meeting different people with different approaches. Cultural prejudices could not stop Him from serving the Gentile world (Matt 15:21-28). His claim to have come to the "house of Israel" (Matt 10:5, 6; 15:24) did not bar Him from ministering to non-Jews. He did not consider people's backgrounds to meet their needs. All this opened the door for Him to implant the kingdom message in individual hearts.

Apostles and Urban Ministry

The author of the book of Acts, evangelist Luke, documented the main missionary campaign by the disciples following Pentecost to start the Gospel Commission. This was carried out in the greater city of Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-12). Luke records not only Jerusalem but also the work in other cities, including Samaria, Damascus, Galilee, and Joppa (8:4-5; 9:2, 31, 36). Thus, the early apostolic mission focused more on the larger communities of Palestine. With this, it is important to know that Antioch, an urban community, was where the disciples were first named 'Christians' (Acts 11:26). Cities like Joppa, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Corinth were important stops on the Apostles' missionary journeys in the New Testament. They also moved from regional cities to bigger geographic areas such as Galatia, Phrygia, Macedonia, Asia, and others.

²³Clarence Benson, *Teaching Techniques for Church Education*, 8th ed. (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training Association, 1983), 20. Benson observes Jesus' usage of parables and argues that "about 25% of Mark and 50% of Luke are in the form of parables-stories, with the word "parable" appearing over 50 times. And some see Jesus' teaching as many as 61 separate parables-stories. It is no wonder that Jesus is called the Master Story-teller. The parables used by Jesus based on illustrations from every day, common life involving persons, plants, animals, nature and objects. Jesus' storytelling was always related to life with each parable-story being designed to address a problem or answer a question which His audience was facing. For example, Luke 12: 13-21."

Paul and Urban Ministry

Jesus' admonition to Saul (Paul) to "rise and go into the city" (Acts 9:6) was an instruction that foreshadowed Saul (Paul)'s ministry to the city of Rome and others. It was, therefore, noted that Apostle Paul's major missionary undertakings in the Gentile world were carried out in urban communities.²⁴ Acts chapters 13 and 14 refer to the apostles' initial urban missionary work. As Jesus sent out the disciples (Matt 10:5; Luke 10:1-2), they also sent out other disciples to minister in different places (Acts 8:4-8, 26-40; 11:19-26; 13:1-3). Acts 13 begins with the church at Syrian Antioch commissioning Paul and Barnabas under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Paul and Barnabas likely planned the new missionary endeavor to reach the city of Cyprus. Again, Salamis was a port city on the eastern coast of Cyprus, and here the two engaged in a practice that would characterize the rest of Paul's missionary career. They taught God's Word in Jewish synagogues (see Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8). Paul's work in the cities was essential to his eschatological message.²⁵

Apostle Paul, the greatest missionary of all time, was uniquely called by Jesus Christ to minister to the Gentiles. In all of his letters to Gentile churches, he usually identified himself as a slave and a servant of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. By this he accentuated his special calling (Rom. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 and 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 and 2 Tim. 1:1). Paul's calling into ministry is special because while the twelve disciples were sent to the house of Israel (Matt 10:5, 6; cf. Matt 15:24), God said of him to Ananias, "Go, for Saul is My chosen instrument to take My message to the Gentiles and kings, as well as to the people of Israel" (Acts 9:15, NLT). According to Edwin D. Freed, Paul joined the Christ movement when it

²⁴ Manuel Ortiz, "The Church and the City," *Themelios* 28, no. 2 (2003): 49-65.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

was spreading out from Palestine, the land of its origin, into the Greco-Roman world northward and westward into lands north of the Mediterranean Sea at the time of dissensions between Jewish and Gentile converts in the mother church in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1-8).²⁶

According to Freed, going to Gentiles who were highly inclined to Hellenism required someone well-informed and who could "philosophize" his way through. The choice of a person of Paul's caliber was inconceivably awesome.²⁷ David Ming observes that whereas Paul's ministry was based on Christ, his approaches to the Gentile cities included many missionary journeys, much reasoning, teaching (17:16-34), dealings with fellow Jews in diaspora (17:1-9; 18:12-17; 19:21-40), visitations and felicitations (14:21-28; 18:18-23; 20:1-2, 17-19), and the employment of a variety of strategies.²⁸ For this, Paul's ministry was characterized by intentional and plain words spoken to the common people in synagogues and marketplaces. He debates with philosophers and rulers in urban centers (Acts 17:17-19). The approaches he used in his three missionary journeys were echoed in the way he interacted with

²⁶ Edwin D. Freed, *The Apostle Paul and His Letters* (London, UK: Equinox, 2005), 7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-8. Paul has in Acts three evangelistic speech engagements that are recorded, and each speech is different from one another. These include: The first speech was to the Jews and God-fearers in Pisidian, Antioch (chap. 13).

- The second was to the illiterate pagans in Lystra (chap. 14).
- The third speech was to the cultured philosophers in Athens (chap. 17).

Thus, the presentation of the gospel to the Gentiles needed a special approach that fits their understanding and worldview and not as to the Jews although the fundamental message was still on Jesus Christ as the true Messiah and savior of the world for both Jews and Gentiles.

²⁸ "For Paul, teaching was the foundation of his evangelistic practice; he wrote, "The Christ we preach ... each one we teach in all wisdom (Col. 1:28). In the two verses above, teaching is an explanation for preaching. In other words, an evangelist fulfills his ministry by teaching. Paul's main goal in evangelism was to convert his listeners to faith in Christ." David Ming, "Theological Foundation: The Apostle Paul and His Framework of Thinking," *International Journal of Indonesian Philosophy & Theology* 4, no. 1 (2023): 20.

people of “secular ideas.” He was chiefly responsible for expanding the early church to include Gentiles.²⁹

Nevertheless, some Christians find Paul appealing, and others find him appalling. Some people have no idea what to think of him, while others know very little about him.³⁰ The million-dollar question is: How did the apostle Paul win many souls? What was his strategy? E. O. Olowoyeye writes about Paul's missionary strategies. He includes ministry in large cities, team ministry, house churches, and tent-making marketplace ministry and contextualizes the gospel message. He contends that researchers have not sufficiently linked these techniques to the apostolic Church's metropolitan success stories.³¹

However, H.Y.J. posits that Paul, as a missionary, employed secular tactics to preach to secularists while also addressing internal concerns about their societies' pluralistic religiosity. He claims Paul founded the Church of Christ on the Gospel and tailored it to the style and cultural milieu of his time. For him, this technique remains a paradigm for modern cross-cultural ministry. Ji declares that Paul's mission strategies were “being all things to all men,” as summarized in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.³² Thus, “Although I am free regarding all, I have made myself a slave to all to win over as many as possible.” To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law, I became like one under the law—though I am not under the law—to

²⁹ Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon* (New York: Harper One, 2009), 20.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Emmanuel Olurokan Olowoyeye, "Paul's Missionary Strategies and their Replications in the Mission Outreaches of Lagos Metropolitan Areas of the Apostolic Church, Nigeria" (PhD diss., University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 2014), 9.

³² H.Y. Ji, “A Study of Paul as a Biblical Model of Contextualization through a Hermeneutical Approach” (PhD diss., University of the Free State, South Africa, 2009), 34

win over those under the law. To those outside the law, I became like one outside the law—though I am not outside God's law, within the law of Christ—to win over those outside the law. To the weak, I became weak to win over the weak. I have become all things to all to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it” (1 Cor. 9:19–23, NAB).

Sung Su Kang suggests that Paul modified Jewish cultural practices such as circumcision, dietary rules, and holidays to make the gospel more compatible with the Gentiles.³³ During the Council of Jerusalem, Paul argued fiercely against the Jews to ensure that Gentiles might follow Jesus in their cultural circumstances. The apostles ultimately embraced Paul and Barnabas' stance on the new circumstances (Acts 15:19-29). God revealed to Peter, Paul, and Barnabas that Gentiles who had not converted to Jewish culture could also receive the Holy Spirit as apostles (Acts 10:13-14). Anthony T. Juliana believes that Paul's approach yielded six principles encapsulated in three strategic objectives: (a) applicable cultural agility, practices of cultural adaptation, cultural minimization, and cultural integration; (b) equality through leadership humility, trust-building, and empowerment; and (c) a centralized mission focus.³⁴

In summary, for the church to be influential, it should recognize, respect, and leverage cultural variety. It must sustain consistent ethical norms across cultures through self-criticism and a willingness to learn from others.

³³ Ebbie Smith and Kang Sung Su, “Toward a New Direction for the Two-Thirds World Missions in Asia: A Korean Church Case Study” (MA thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998), 51.

³⁴ Anthony T. Juliana, "Paul's Adaptation of Cultural Agility in 1 Corinthians 9: 19–23," In *Biblical Cross-Cultural Leadership: Principles from the New Testament* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024), 75-97.

Ellen G. White's Perspective of Urban Ministry

Ellen White wrote extensively about city ministry, particularly reaching out to the people through institutions.³⁵ It should be noted that she frequently used the phrase "work in the cities" to refer to urban ministry. This section reviews three aspects of some of her writings and beliefs about urban ministry: (I) God's willingness to reach out to cities. (II) those who must do that work, and (III) the Ellen White urban ministry strategies. The final portion will include observations and conclusions about work in cities.

Ellen White had a dream on April 1, 1874, of reaching out to cities. The Seventh-day Adventist Church's General Conference dispatched John Nevins Andrews and his family as its first missionaries to Europe in the same year. Since Ellen White was too old to attend the 38th General Conference on May 16, 1913, Pastor A. G. Daniells read her messages. In her May 27 speech, she discussed her travels since the 1909 General Conference and urged the church to prioritize working with the Holy Spirit in both big and small places.³⁶

God's Willingness to Reach Out to the Cities

According to Ellen G. White, the entire globe is God's vast vineyard, and He is the source of city work. The cities and villages are part of the vineyard and need to be tended.³⁷ She underscores that God wishes church leaders to view the ministry in a broader context; she emphasizes that leaders should never lose sight of the fact that

³⁵ Ted N. C. Wilson, "A Study of Ellen G. White's Theory of Urban Religious Work as It Relates to Seventh-day Adventist Work in New York City" (PhD diss, New York University, 1981), 21.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Oakland, CA: Review and Herald, 902), 7:34-35.

the message is for the entire world. It must be spread to all cities and villages and proclaimed on highways and byways. "You are not to localize the proclamation of the message."³⁸ Mrs. White stresses the relevance of metropolitan areas in the gospel commission, emphasizing their important role in 21st-century ministry. Despite being almost a century old, her thoughts remain relevant, pressing the Adventist Church to address urban ministry obligations.

She warns that the church has made little progress in this area and that neglecting to act zealously will result in growing Satanic challenges that may stymie their efforts.³⁹ She laments that the adherents of the Adventist faith must see the work in the urban centers as God sees it and approach it with all the urgency it deserves: "Oh, that we might see the needs of these cities as God sees them! At such a time as this, every hand is to be employed. The Lord is coming; the end is near; yea, it hastens greatly!"⁴⁰

Accordingly, Mrs. White affirms that God calls his people from churches to establish publishing houses for their writings. She insisted that the Lord had commanded his servants to work in the municipalities from outposts and underlined that the church must create places of worship as a memorial to God in cities, build publishing facilities for the distribution of its literature, build hospitals for the sick, and establish workers' training centers outside of cities. She explicitly states that the youth must be shielded against the temptations of city life.⁴¹

³⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Oakland, CA: Review and Herald, 902), 36.

³⁹ Ellen G. White, *Ministry to the Cities* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2012), 4.

⁴⁰ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1909), 9:101.

⁴¹ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1907), 358

Those Who Work in Urban Centers

E. G. White emphasized that the global proclamation of the gospel in urban areas requires participation from all church members, not just pastors. She stated that God's work cannot be completed without the collaboration of the entire church membership alongside ministers. George R. Knight expands on White's views in "Living in Cities," noting that she encouraged Adventist families to move to urban settings and work collectively. He highlights the challenges of urban ministry and the necessity for individuals with various skills to engage in diverse roles.

She advises that the problems of urban ministry be addressed from within the church before connecting with the people in the cities. According to Knight, Mrs. White recognized that the problem with the Adventist Church was that people's diverse abilities were not combined for the benefit of urban ministry. Always, just a few members respond to urban ministry, and little is accomplished. She then remarks that the Lord intended for the cities to be staffed by a diverse workforce.⁴² Ellen G. White understood the distinction between working in rural areas and metropolises. She recognized that working in cities was tough due to the diverse population, different ethnic groups, hectic business schedules, people's limited time, travelers, and other urban challenges.

She emphasizes, "We feel intensely about the work in our cities. There are a few ready to engage in the work. There are people of all classes to be met; the work is difficult. We are to establish institutions in the cities to reach the people."⁴³ Again, her advocacy for building institutions in the cities could hardly be disregarded. She

⁴² Ellen G. White, *Ministry to the Cities* (Mountain View, CA: *Ellen G. White Estate*, 2012), 109.

⁴³ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 67.

opined that medical missionary activity should have representatives in cities. Centers must be built, and missions must be established. Gospel ministers should serve with medical missionaries. According to her, this was revealed to her, as the effort would break down the world's bias against the truth. She stated that medical missionary work was becoming increasingly important and had captured the interest of many in the public. It was part of the gospel message and must be recognized.⁴⁴

Moreover, she promoted individual urban ministry. According to her, the Lord is calling both men and women who possess the light of truth to carry out genuine personal missionary activity right now. She mentioned church members who reside in urban areas, in particular, to serve those who are eager to hear the gospel. Those who fully submit to God's call will get many blessings. Such workers will find that many people who could never be reached in any other way will respond to deliberate personal effort when they go out to win souls for Jesus.⁴⁵ Generally, Mrs. White promotes urban ministry through the joint efforts of ministers, church members, families, and individuals.

The Ellen White Urban Ministry Strategies

According to Tan, the early Adventist Church benefited greatly from public pulpit preaching and tent evangelistic initiatives, which were prevalent methods for spreading God's word in those days. He, however, adds that when Ellen White challenged church leaders to minister to large cities, she advocated for the church to look beyond such strategies and try other approaches. She emphasized the importance of introducing fresh ways to wake up God's people to meet the needs of urban

⁴⁴ Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1932), 239.

⁴⁵ Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1910), 332.

dwellers. Mrs. White also contends that some of the strategies required in urban ministry will vary from those employed in the past and that no one should block the way with criticism because of the approaches.⁴⁶ Ellen White believes that Christ's approach in his earthly ministry can serve as the best model for all types of ministry. She teaches, "The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then he bade them, 'Follow me.' This method necessitates thorough preparation and organization, as every contact provides an opportunity for missionary action. Mrs. White stresses that believers should serve God in their communities."⁴⁷

Summary

In summary, Mrs. White saw God's call to city ministry as an urgent and significant obligation. She emphasizes the significance of believers actively sharing the gospel message and living out their faith in urban settings to reach others who have yet to hear the truth. She also stated that, while it is God's will that devoted and talented workers reside in urban centers to lead the public ministry, it is also God's intention that church members living in these locations use their God-given gifts to minister to others.

Ellen White's writings demonstrate God's instructions for municipal work. She dreamed that God closely followed the actions of church leaders and directed that the cities must be reached. Her views on the centrality of Christ in city work were significant and foundational to urban ministry. She saw the pattern of Christ's ministry

⁴⁶ Ellen G. White, "City Missions," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 11 (2015): 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

as the best example of city ministry. Christ mingled with people, proclaimed the gospel, and met the people's spiritual, physical, and emotional needs.

Conclusion

Urban ministry is a missionary endeavor that attends to the physical, social, and spiritual needs of city people. A theological understanding of urban reality grounded in the Bible is necessary for effective urban ministry. In a heartfelt exchange between friends, Yahweh told Abraham, His friend, what would happen in Sodom. He even permitted Abraham to negotiate a reversal of the judgment that He (Yahweh) had declared against Sodom, suggesting that God was concerned about the city (Gen 6–13).

When it comes to punishment, the argument that God discriminates between righteous and evil people, as well as between rural and urban areas, is baseless. According to the Old Testament passages, God cares about treating both urban and rural dealers impartially. Abraham's viewpoint on the topic throughout the talk is still applicable to urban ministry. He persisted in his argument. Thus, Abraham's contribution to the discussion blends two opposed forces: determination and respect. Abraham's striving for fairness suggests that God could redeem the urban folk. Not only were the righteous' fates at stake, but also “Sodomites” and the concept of a just God. The figures used in the argument and the corresponding climax of its intensity strengthened Abraham's position. By gradually reducing the number of righteous individuals needed to preserve a doomed city, Abraham first establishes the idea that the righteous should not be punished for the sins of the wicked.

Again, Abraham's question, "Will you destroy the city?" was to elicit God's view of the city and also to strengthen the notion of urban ministry. God declares time and time again that he will not destroy the wicked city to protect a righteous minority.

This indicates that God is concerned about city dwellers in general rather than any atoning role of the minority. Given Nineveh's indisputable significance to God, it is necessary to acknowledge that the city experienced one of the most ambitious ministries of antiquity. Jonah's hesitance to preach to the city did not limit God's grace. He (God) was emphatic that He cared for the city.

In the Christian worldview, urban ministry is found in Jesus Christ and brings about systemic transformation in urban society. Understanding Christ's great commission (Matt 28:19-20) as God's living counsel can lead to effective kingdom service in the cities. There are a variety of spiritually motivated activities associated with Jesus Christ that contribute to this concept of urban ministry. These include understanding the different characters, gifts, needs, and perspectives of urban regions. The church must acknowledge its unavoidable commitment to the cities. The apostles, particularly Paul, dealt much in the ancient cities of Palestine. Mrs. White also wrote extensively about ministry in the urban communities. She counseled on the need to establish schools, sanatoriums, and hospitals in the cities. Again, she instructed the church leaders to look beyond the status quo on a variety of strategies in urban ministry.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite their challenges, larger cities continue to expand in population, diversity, complexity, and ministry potential. According to the United Nations Population Census, by 2050, more than 70% of the world's population is expected to reside in cities. That means over 10 million residents will be concentrated in the large cities.¹ The shift to urban centers heightens cities as critical mission fields. This part of the study examines and evaluates academic perspectives on urban ministry, including its types, potential, challenges, and the Adventist narrative of urban ministry. Roger Greenway writes that the Adventist Church must rethink its mission techniques by considering historical antecedents and current competition. His point is that if the Adventist Church wants to remain influential and relevant in urban communities, it needs to vary the approaches employed to reach urban ministry.² Such strategic thinking reinforces the need for more intentional efforts in urban ministry by effectively strategizing the gospel within the urban context.

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Urbanization Prospects 2023: Urban Population to Reach 70 % by 2050* (New York: United Nations, 2023), 20. In this report the UN projects that more than 70 % of the global population will reside in urban areas by 2050, with the number of large cities and megacities continuing to grow.

² R. S. Greenway, *Apostles to the City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978), 45.

Definition of Urban Ministry

According to Ronald E. Peters, the idea of urban ministry involves more than just demographic data or population trends. It comprises the urbanization of the world and the related challenges of Christian ministry in an urbanized context. It focused on how people connect and how divine realities occur in the urban environment—a social, geographical, and spiritual framework—as well as what the urban setting says about God. Simply put, Peters defines urban ministry as a way of understanding God based on the dynamics of the city, in addition to a theological praxis that seeks to improve the quality of life for all of creation.³ Francis M. DuBose also refers to urban ministry as the strategic adaptation of mission endeavors to the distinct social dynamics of urban settings.⁴ DuBose’s definition emphasizes the deliberate use of ministry initiatives in the unique social dynamics of metropolitan settings.

Furthermore, Alan McMahan defines urban ministry as fulfilling the physical and spiritual needs of urban residents, fostering holistic development of urban communities, and positioning the church as an agent of change in the urban environment. McMahan recognizes the church as a catalyst for social transformation, accomplished through a purposeful and strategic approach of proclaiming the gospel while meeting the practical needs of the fast-rising urbanized population. He feels that grasping the major variations between ministries in urban and rural contexts is critical for successfully addressing the unique aspects of urban ministry. He, therefore, highlights that cities have special potential for spreading the gospel and growing the

³ Ronald Edward Peters, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007).

⁴ F. M. DuBose, “The Practice of Urban Ministry: Urban Evangelism,” *Review and Expositor* 80, no. 4 (1983): 515.

church due to their large populations, cultural diversity, and intricate social structures.⁵

In summary, all definitions of urban ministry agree that it is a strategic, holistic, and contextualized approach to ministry rather than simply a geographic aspect. It addresses the social and spiritual dimensions of urban life to change lives, empower communities, and establish the church as a force for human good in the face of the unique challenges of city living. In a nutshell, urban ministry is defined as a set of core values to drive the church's planned actions. Compassion, empowerment, community welfare, equal treatment, and collaboration are all fundamental values. By embracing these values, urban ministry can effect long-term change by addressing the core causes of social injustice rather than simply treating the symptoms. All of these ideals should have their roots in the Bible and should be carried out with the motive of winning people into the kingdom of God.

Types of Urban Ministry

Urban ministry has multiple types, such as mission urban ministry, asset-based urban ministry, justice-oriented urban ministry, incarnation urban ministry, and holistic urban ministry. According to Heidi Rolland, P. N. Olson, and Ronald J. Sider, there are various forms of urban ministry based on the focus and techniques used by faith-based organizations.⁶

⁵ F. M. DuBose, "The Practice of Urban Ministry: Urban Evangelism," *Review and Expositor* 80, no. 4 (1983), 515.

⁶ Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson, and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches that Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 92.

Holistic Urban Ministry

Holistic urban ministry is a comprehensive approach that recognizes the interconnections of the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of urban communities. According to DeYoung, holistic urban ministry addresses the community's spiritual and emotional needs. He notes that holistic urban ministry requires a commitment to community development, social justice, and spiritual growth.⁷ Perkins also emphasizes the importance of holistic urban ministry, stating that "the most effective way to minister to the urban environment is to address their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs simultaneously."⁸

Similarly, Hart identifies with this type of urban ministry and explains that holistic urban ministry recognizes the city as a complex system and that our ministry must be equally complex and multifaceted to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of urban residents.⁹ Furthermore, Soerens contends that holistic urban ministry is critical for creating community transformation because it aims to address the core causes of poverty and inequality thoroughly and collaboratively.¹⁰

Incarnation Urban Ministry

Incarnational urban ministry is another form that takes a contextual approach, emphasizing the need to immerse oneself in the community to foster relationships and

⁷ Colin G. DeYoung, Lena C. Quilty, and Jordan B. Peterson, "Between Facets and Domains: 10 Aspects of the Big Five," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 93, no. 5 (2007): 880–896. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.5.880>.

⁸ John Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 54.

⁹ K. Hart, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 78.

¹⁰ Edgar H Bachrach and Austin Ray Berg, *The New Chicago Way: Lessons from other Big Cities* (Dr. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2019), 1-13.

understand the local environment to solve their problems, all to share the Gospel. Soong Chan Rah, an advocate of this kind of urban ministry, says God's intentional movement toward humanity is at the center of the incarnation ministry. As a part of God's ultimate sacrifice, He desired to be among His children. This is the reason for His incarnation. As a result, Jesus' life is studied in terms of both his incarnation and deeds.¹¹ Juliet Kilpins explains that incarnation ministry involves a readiness to live in the community, learn from it, and undergo transformation in the experience.¹² DeYoung also notes that incarnational urban ministry is not just about ministering to the urban poor but about becoming their neighbor and their friend.¹³

Asset-Based Urban Ministry

The asset-based urban ministry is a revolutionary approach that identifies and uses the resources and possessions already present in urban neighborhoods. Asset-based urban ministry recognizes that urban communities are reservoirs of hidden assets and capacities that can be used to help address communal challenges. Perkins believes that asset-based urban ministry is crucial for empowering urban dwellers and promoting community-led development because it places value on local assets, especially persons, rather than on bringing in outside resources.¹⁴ According to

¹¹ Soong-Chan Rah, "Rethinking Incarnational Ministry," *CCDA Theological Journal* 2 (2013): 31-37.

¹² Juliet Kilpin, *Urban to the Core: Motives for Incarnational Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014).

¹³ Kevin DeYoung, "Tis Mystery All, the Immortal Dies: Why the Gospel of Christ's Suffering is More Glorious Because God Does Not Suffer," *The Gospel Coalition*, published April 20, 2010, accessed March 24, 2014, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/tis-mystery-all-the-immortal-dies/>.

¹⁴ Perkins, *Restoring At-risk Communities*.

Richard Burgess, this ministry is prevalent among African Pentecostal churches for community leadership development, participation, and worldwide networks.¹⁵

Justice-Oriented Urban Ministry

The justice-oriented urban ministry seeks to reduce urban social injustice, particularly that which impacts the underprivileged, vulnerable, and impoverished. It plays an advocacy role in structural change in favor of the weak and disadvantaged by tackling the root causes of injustice rather than providing a short-term solution to poverty and inequality. Elizabeth D. Ríos claims that while many organizations and religions work on social injustice through social action for community transformation, their definitions of justice differ; as a result, they are unable to take drastic measures as Jesus did.¹⁶

Missional Urban Ministry

Richardson Rick explains that being in "mission" refers to the desire to serve as a missionary within one's own community, a notion that has gained significant traction in the emerging church movement.¹⁷ According to Gerson P. Santos, a mission community model focuses on assimilation of new members and the ideals of being the church. For the church community, this is a new paradigm. Regardless of a person's religious background, this approach seeks to establish a third space where

¹⁵ Richard H. Burgess, "Pentecostals and Development in Nigeria and Zambia: Community Organizing as a Response to Poverty and Violence," *Penteco Studies* 14, no. 2 (2015): 176-204.

¹⁶ Elizabeth D. Ríos, "Developing Civically Engaged, Justice-Oriented Churches Right from the Start -A Hispanic Pentecostal Perspective Pentecostal Perspective" (DMin diss., Southeastern University, 2019), 48.

¹⁷ Gerson P. Santos, "Urban Mission Models," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 10, no. 2 (2014): 70-81.

they can comfortably read the Bible and pray.¹⁸ Effective urban ministry involves a comprehensive and diverse approach that addresses the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of urban residents. Urban ministry may foster collaboration among organizations and people groups by using a variety of strategies, resulting in a more holistic impact on the community. This collaborative effort not only enhances resource sharing but also builds a stronger sense of community and support among participants.

Prospects for Urban Ministry

This section of the study investigates projections or prospects. According to James Scherer, the character of ministry in the twenty-first century differs significantly from that of the twentieth century.¹⁹ He says it is popular to suggest that we live in a post-Christian era where Christianity no longer dominates customs, laws, morality, and education. Churches must be appealing to the people. James observes again that Colonialism, too, in the old sense of the term, is dead. With the end of Western missionary subservience, churches become self-reliant and indigenous in their context and environment, strengthening their cultural identity. To appeal to Christianity as a “Western Faith” is to risk calling it into contempt in many parts of the world.²⁰ These signify great prospects for the church in many parts of the world where indigenous people minister to brothers and sisters without barriers.

¹⁸ Rick Richardson, "Emerging Missional Movements: An Overview and Assessment of Some Implications for Mission(s)," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 37, no. 3 (2013): 131-136.

¹⁹ James A. Scherer, "Prospects and Problems in Global Evangelization," *Word and World* 1 (1981): 9-19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

Moreover, approximately one-third of the global population has moved from an agrarian structure to a Western lifestyle. The atheistic ideology of scientific socialism has replaced the teachings of Christianity or other traditional religions as the dominant mode of thought in society.²¹ According to the foregoing view, individuals residing in metropolitan regions, while not necessarily atheists, are not faithful to religious convictions, and their rising separation from the Christian world demands urban ministry. Gary Fujino, Timothy R. Sisk, and Tereso C. Casino also express that, over the past fifty years, White Evangelicals have generally viewed the cities with skepticism, suspicion, and condemnation. They denigrated the cities as violent, morally rotting, and awash in poverty. The Evangelicals' theology eventually adjusted to this change, and their worldview either created excuses to disparage urban living or ignored urban ministry completely. By these tendencies, the Evangelical communities no longer have a strategic edge in the global growth of the church and its mission.²²

Notwithstanding the positive and negative aspects of the metropolitan community, urban ministry theology should effectively minister the gospel to urban life, focusing on both public and private spheres and unveiling power and effectiveness, as Jesus, Peter, and Paul demonstrated. Gary Fujino and Co. list the following ten facts on why urban communities offer strategic leverage for ministry. "1) The cities are where the people are; 2) High density creates opportunity; 3) the cities bring freedom; 4) The cities are filled with receptive people; 5) The nations are moving to the cities; 6) The city is going to the world; 7) The city as the engine of

²¹ James A. Scherer, "Prospects and Problems in Global Evangelization," *Word and World* 1 (1981): 9-19.

²² Alan McMahan, "The Strategic Nature of Urban Ministry," in *Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-first Century*, no. 20. eds. Gary Fujino, Timothy R. Sisk, and Tereso C. Casino (London: William Carey Publishing, 2012), 1.

culture; 8) the city as the crossroads; 9) The city as a place of meeting human need; and 10) The city is a places for reinvention.”²³

For the urban ministry, the Adventist church contends that, in light of the combined forces of urbanization, globalization, and postmodernism, an extensive review of urban mission strategies and methods is critical for the development of postmodern-sensitive churches as the church seeks to fulfil its call to participate in God's mission to urbanized, post-modernizing generations.²⁴ During its quinquennium of 2010-2015 session, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's 2013 Annual Council chose "It's Time" as the specific theme of emphasis for the 2015-2020 quinquennium to highlight the need for urban ministry. The church compares the prospects of the metropolitan church to those of the rural community and concludes that the urban church has a greater comparative advantage, in addition to being a biblical mandate.

It positions urban mission efforts in a three-part goal, as stated in the paper endorsed by the Annual Council:

1. Use the global church's pooled resources to develop a Seventh-day Adventist presence and needs-based ministry in cities with a population of one million or more without an Adventist congregation.
2. In all other cities with a population of one million or more, increase the proportion of members and worshiping groups to the population.

²³ Ibid., 2-14.

²⁴ Kleber de Oliveira Gonçalves, "A Critique of the Urban Mission of the Church in the Light of an Emerging Postmodern Condition," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 1, no. 2 (2005): 102-103.

3. Make sure that divisions and associated organizations, especially local churches, prioritize the growing challenge of urban ministry in their territory.²⁵

According to Miroslav Pujic, the Christian church has mostly stood on the sidelines about inner-city ministry. It has either ignored the transition or condemned those who participate in it. For him, responding to urban ministry is not an option for any church that plans to make disciples. It is the way to do church today, and it is possible to reach and disciple postmodern people. He believes post-modern makes excellent Christians and must be engaged, won, and nurtured. He emphasizes that the message must be seen and felt, not just heard.²⁶

Cultural Relevance and Contextualization in Urban Ministry

Cultural relevance and contextualization are critical components of effective urban ministry. Successful outreach requires an understanding of the local cultural dynamics. Huotari and Gronlund emphasize the importance of integrating cultural identities into ministry Programme. They argue that a “one-size-fits-all approach” is insufficient for a diverse urban community.²⁷ Dizon also reiterates the importance of culturally sensitive techniques. He believed that many secularized people have unique spiritual requirements that traditional Adventist outreach techniques of public and tent

²⁵ AdventistMission.org, “Mission to the Cities,” accessed 29 September 2024, <https://am.adventistmission.org/360-mission-to-the-cities>.

²⁶ Miroslav Pujic, "A Disciple-making Strategy to Reach the Emerging Postmodern Generation," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 1, no. 2 (2005): 103-103.

²⁷ Rosa Huotari and Henrietta Gronlund, “From Below, to Inclusion, Through Transformation: Urban Theology in the Twenty-First Century,” *Open Theology* 10, no. 1 (2024): 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2024-0002v>.

pulpit campaigns do not adequately meet.²⁸ He believed that in ministry, contextualization is essential to permeate and adapt the gospel to different cultures while maintaining its primary message.²⁹

Gifford also observes that contemporary evangelists in Accra, Ghana, are increasingly using culturally sensitive tactics, such as local costumes and music, to address societal issues on health and education. The incorporation of the gospel into everyday challenges has resulted in widespread acceptance of the message. Similarly, a few Adventist churches in Kumasi organised the "Health and Awareness Exposition" on common health issues such as malaria prevention, hypertension, and diabetes control, which was a vast and extraordinary outreach that touched people's lives and met the community's needs. The event drew a large attendance and provided an opportunity to discuss spiritual issues.³⁰

To be effective in an urban community, missionary workers must be culturally sensitive to the values and practices of these perspectives:

1. Use of Local Media and Arts:

- Wearing local attire and telling local stories can open doors for programs in a more relatable and engaging way.
- Using local languages in radio and TV coverage, as well as interpreting messages, broadens the audience and interest.

²⁸ Ermela T. Dizon, "Understanding Secularized People of Metro Manila: A Case Study Approach for a Contextualized Urban Ministry Strategy" (DMin diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 2023), 23.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ghana Adventist News, "Evangelism Campaigns in Kumasi: A Holistic Approach," accessed 23 June 2024, www.ghanadventistnews.org.

2. Addressing Urban Challenges: Programs tackling urgent urban issues such as public health, unemployment, and housing shortages give credibility and relevance. Vocational training and entrepreneurial workshops are consistent with the Adventist philosophy of holistic ministry.³¹
3. Heightening Events and Engaging with Community Leaders: Partnering with chiefs, assemblymen, and traditional leaders opens avenues for urban ministry and portrays respect for cultural paradigms.
4. Reverence for Religious Syncretism: When speaking on theological differences, the ministry must not dismiss or demonize local practices but accommodate itself within the cultural setting. In doing so, it may identify points of resonance with aspects of African traditional Religion that align with Christian principles, including respect for creation and community.³²

Theologically, contextualization is congruent with Christ's incarnation ministry. Urban ministry should immerse itself in local culture, explicitly redeeming cultural norms, just as Christ "dwelt among us" (John 1:14), seeking to point people to the universal truths of the gospel. This strategy is comparable to the advice Ellen White offered on how to share the gospel: "By mingling with men as one who desires their good, you will win their hearts."³³

Approaches for Reaching Multicultural Groups in Urban Setting

³¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 43.

³² K. A. Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion* (Accra, Ghana: FEP International, 1978), 56.

³³ White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 86.

According to Peterson, "culture" is something we cannot perceive "in its intrapsychic or internal manifestation." He claims that the term "culture" has become overused and abused, driving the use of synonyms and phrases without proper definitions. This dilution of meaning, he argues, not only complicates definitions of culture but also undermines the richness of the concept itself. As a result, we risk losing the depth and nuances that truly define culture in society. Therefore, it may not be easy to define culture. He does, however, explain that culture arises from human society and offers order to the naturally chaotic society.³⁴

However, Ryken contends that Christianity's support for culture stems from the belief that God created order from chaos. This idea of a society evolving a Trinitarian definition of culture. That, Culture is the core makeup of a group of people where unity is found in the community with all its potential diversity.³⁵ Weyers, therefore, defines multiculturalism as the coexistence of different cultures in the same area, whether geographically or philosophically. Therefore, a multicultural community is a group of different cultures that come together within a specific area.

The multi-million-dollar question that demands answers is how the gospel triumphs in the multicultural community. What approaches are ideal for a multicultural society? Effectively reaching out to multicultural communities requires theologically informed and culturally sensitive strategies. Cities are distinguished by their considerable cultural diversity, with people of many ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds coexisting in the same setting. Language barriers, religious diversity, and social splits make cities even more unique. According to Moyer,

³⁴ Jordan B. Peterson, *Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 109.

³⁵ Philip G. Ryken, *My Father's World: Meditations on Christianity and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 278.

cultural diversity demands a multi-faceted approach that is “adaptive and appropriate for cross-cultural settings.”³⁶ The following are some strategies to use:

Willingness to Confront Challenging Issues that Threaten Unity

Parnell Lovelace asserts that urban populations are more aware of the issues multiculturalism and marginalization provide. Fortunately, many urban people have established connections and understanding through societal structures, marriages, schools, and law enforcement. He opines that any effort taken to minister in the urban community must not ignore the challenges of disunity but rather take the initiative through dialogue and appropriate actions.³⁷ The church must be willing to face difficult topics that threaten unity by acknowledging differences while celebrating commonalities. Again, the worship service in urban centers should incorporate several genres of language, music, preaching, teaching, and other means of communication to attract people from all backgrounds. Theologically, Jesus’ ministry was not only salvation-based but also the renewal of society. Working with multicultural groups is an opportunity for the church to exemplify “the all-inclusive love of Christ.”³⁸

The Community's Culture: A Key Unifying Factor of Urban Ministry

Conn, Harvie, and Manuel Ortiz believe that a community's shared culture is vital to linking its many ethnic groups. For them, every community has a distinct culture that connects the residents as neighbors in some way. This urban

³⁶ B. C. Moyer, *7 Million Churches to Go* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987), 131.

³⁷ Parnell M. Lovelace Jr., “Implementing a Structured Small Group Curriculum among African American Men at the Center of Praise Ministries” (DMin diss., Biola University, La Mirada, CA, 2012), 65.

³⁸ Ibid.

neighbourhood culture must serve as a unifying factor while also allowing and respecting the unique ways.³⁹

The Gospel Message Contextualized

Paul Salem observes that while the notions of contextualization remain the same, our understandings of culture, "indigeneity," and ethnicity have transformed considerably as a result of globalization, technology, and urbanization, all of which defy static cultural conceptions. Historically, contextualization has been inherent in the spread of Christianity, as indicated by the gospel's "translatibility."⁴⁰ Lamin Sanneh also opines that early Protestant mission efforts prioritized language translation above cultural difficulties, often viewing culture as a barrier to the gospel and presuming Western civilization to be the ideal model for Christian action.⁴¹

Holistic Ministry

Culbertson defines a holistic ministry as working on the whole person—spirit, soul, and body—by combining spiritual guidance with practical help like food, shelter, education, and emotional support. This is similar to how Jesus combined preaching with physical help (healing, feeding) to bring about profound change in people and communities.⁴²

³⁹ Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City the People of God* (London: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 56.

⁴⁰ Paul Salem, "Culture and the City: Rethinking Contextualization for Urban Peoples," *The Great Commission Baptist Journal of Missions* 2, no. 2 (2023): 1-24.

⁴¹ Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 54.

⁴² Howard Culbertson, "Do Christian missionaries only care about "saving souls" and Ignore Poverty, Education, or Healthcare?" accessed 6 January 2025, <https://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/holistic.htm#:~:text=Jesus%20ministry%20was%20holistic.%20He,approach%20to%20foreign%20missionary%20work>.

Small Group Ministries

According to Don James, small groups are among the most effective ministries for equipping, making disciples, and expanding the church. They can also be readily modified for urban settings and countries with limited access. For urban churches, small groups serve as the model.⁴³ Small groups provide us with a means of interacting with others in our community. He says, Jesus and his twelve disciples were always reaching out to touch people's lives, providing for their needs, and healing a great number of them.⁴⁴

Use of Media and Technology

Digital ministry is critical for reaching urban, multi-ethnic people. Adventist World Mission regards rapidly growing online platforms in all corners of the world as an essential means of reaching the global space with the gospel. According to Adventist World Mission, using internet platforms like social media and online Bible studies makes it simple to engage with younger generations who are growing up away from traditional homes and forms of worship.⁴⁵

Knight adds that the Adventist Church ministry's theology emphasizes the gospel's life-changing power in all cultures. He believes that multicultural urban ministry should reflect Christ's inclusive method. Jesus preached to individuals from many backgrounds, and the Apostle Paul's service in cosmopolitan cities is an

⁴³ Don James, "Small Groups as a Model for Urban Churches," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 10, no. 2 (2014): 4-5.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ AdventistMission.org, "Mission to the Cities."

illustration of ministry among urban people. For Knight, this perspective underscores the importance of adapting ministry approaches to diverse cultural contexts, mirroring the inclusive nature of Christ's teachings. By doing so, the church can effectively reach and engage a broader audience, fostering a sense of community among varied populations.⁴⁶

Adventist Approach to Urban Ministry

Cities have existed since Cain's time, but they have traditionally been a mostly disregarded frontier of mission by Christendom,⁴⁷ and the Adventist Church is no exception. The history of Adventist urban ministry cannot be traced back to its formal establishment. According to Trim and Chism, in the middle of the twentieth century, only six years before London was afflicted by the great smog, Ellen G. White's arguments on the benefits of rural life as opposed to urban life, contained in the book "Country Living," became extremely prominent.⁴⁸ Trim and Chism assert that many Adventists often quote "Out of the cities, out of the cities!" as though it were Ellen White's definitive statement on urban ministry.⁴⁹ They emphasized that the outcry had a significant impact on urban ministry.

⁴⁶ G. R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 89.

⁴⁷ Roger S. Greenway, "Antioch: A Biblical Model of Urban Church Development," in *Cities: Missions New Frontier*, edited by Roger S. Greenway and Timothy M. Monsma (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989), 31-42.

⁴⁸ D. J. B. Trim and A. L. Chism, "Ellen G. White and Mission Work in Cities," *Perspective Digest* 27, no. 3 (2022), accessed 17 January 2025, <https://www.perspectivedigest.org/archive/27-3/ellen-g-white-and-mission-work-in-cities>.

⁴⁹ D. J. B. Trim and A. L. Chism, "Ellen G. White and Mission Work in Cities," *Perspective Digest* 27, no. 3 (2022), accessed 17 January 2025, <https://www.perspectivedigest.org/archive/27-3/ellen-g-white-and-mission-work-in-cities>.

Denis Fortin stresses that the book was one of the smallest yet most influential compilations of Ellen White's writings. According to him, it had a "profound impact upon many aspects of Adventist ethos" such as education, home life, and ministry.⁵⁰

For Kelvin Onongha, early Adventism usually advocated escaping urban areas in favour of modest rural living because cities were viewed as Babylon. He emphasizes that many church properties were situated in rural areas due to the "country living" philosophy. This is particularly true in locations where the church has a long history and occasionally larger congregations.⁵¹

How the Adventist Urban Ministry Mindset Began

George R. Knight explains that Adventist and cities have not always been compatible. However, current programs, such as "Mission to the Cities" and "It is Time," were altering this.⁵² He explains that the Adventist mindset originated in nineteenth-century America, motivated by Jeffersonian ideas of small communities and independent farmers. Joshua V. Himes' strength allowed William Miller, a farmer, to penetrate New York and Philadelphia. Knight opines that though Himes was not a Sabbatarian Adventist, the pioneers may have used his financial means to reach the cities. However, they were rural and village sort of people whose ministry methods worked well in their settings. George Knight reveals that the characteristic of the Seventh-day Adventist evangelists was to travel to villages, inviting Adventist families to schoolhouse sessions. Provocative titles such as "Which Day is the

⁵⁰ Denis Fortin, "Country Living," *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 743.

⁵¹ Kelvin Okey Onongha, "A Theological Framework for Adventist Urban Ministry," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 15, no. 1 (2019): 23-37.

⁵² George R. Knight "Cities: An Adventist Challenge," *Adventist Review*, May 2, 2016, accessed 23 December 2024, <https://adventistreview.org/magazine-article/cities-an-adventist-challenge/>.

Sabbath?" and "What Happens When a Person Dies?" roused viewers' attention and curiosity.⁵³

He was emphatic that in the nineteenth century, Adventism grew in rural areas due to fear of city evils and the possibility of waste and servitude. For many Adventists, Ellen White's promotion of spiritual growth in the natural environment underlined the significance of avoiding cities of corruption, wickedness, and health difficulties.⁵⁴

Shifts in Adventist Attitudes toward Cities

George recounts three factors that shifted Adventist attitudes toward Cities.

(1) Commissioning of "The Three Angels' Message:" The church's acceptance to preach "The Three Angels' Message" to every nation, tribe, language, and people resulted in substantial shifts in Adventist attitudes toward cities. In the early 1880s, Adventist pioneer missions were established in places such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, for reading the Bible, lecturing in halls and residences, and conducting Sabbath School studies.

(2) Medical and Gospel Outreach Initiatives: In the 1890s, Adventist missionaries led by J. H. Kellogg concentrated on poverty alleviation and welfare-oriented missions in the urban areas. Kellogg's sanatoriums, Medical Missionary work, and initiatives like the Chicago Medical Mission provided a paradigm for combining health and gospel. They did stimulate a growth in church membership in metropolitan cities.

⁵³ George R. Knight "Cities: An Adventist Challenge," *Adventist Review*, May 2, 2016, accessed 23 December 2024, <https://adventistreview.org/magazine-article/cities-an-adventist-challenge/>

⁵⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 7:87.

(3) Ellen White's Promotion of City Ministry: In the early 20th century, Ellen White emphasized the importance of Adventist interest in cities. She proposed two approaches to city evangelism: "outpost evangelism," where Adventist institutions were established near large cities but workers did not live there, and "moving into cities" to establish the standard of Christ.⁵⁵

The history of Adventist urban ministry was a story of engagement of theological vision, social transformation, and pragmatic approaches. Ellen G. White's prophetic guidance and the challenges of urban contexts have all profoundly impacted and inspired the evolution of the Adventist Church's urban mission from the late 19th century to today. The Adventist Church launched its formal urban ministry in the late 19th century. The period was characterized by rapid urbanization and the consequent pressing social and spiritual needs.

In the 20th century, the Adventist Church expanded its urban ministry efforts through "Small Group" ministries within urban environments. These organizations highlighted personal ministry and local outreach.⁵⁶ At this time, the Church set up outpost centers, which were rural structures close to cities. They trained workers and provided logistical support without the high costs of urban living. As David Trim points out, the years 1880–1915 were particularly revolutionary for the church. The Church evolved from a primarily rural milieu to an intentional engagement with metropolitan centers. Key factors included: Demographic and Cultural Diversity: Urban-cantered both enabled access to ethnically and socioeconomically diverse populations. Theological Development: The socioreligious realities of cities as canters

⁵⁵ Knight "Cities: An Adventist Challenge."

⁵⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, "Trim David, PhD.," accessed 23 December 2024, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/david-trim,-ph.d>.

of culture and knowledge were a significant impetus for this shift.⁵⁷

Challenges Facing Urban Ministry

The world continues to be urbanized in fast-growing economies around the world.⁵⁸ The urban ministry works with those who have been marginalized politically, socially, economically, and religiously. The church must recognize that we live in an urban culture, necessitating a complete ministry that understands the dynamics, dimensions, and challenges of the contemporary urban environment. Some of the difficulties facing urban ministry include the following:

Challenging Environment in Which Urban Ministry Operates

Peters R. Edward asserts that understanding the fundamental principles of urban ministry necessitates considering the challenging environment in which it operates. One of the most difficult things for urban ministry practitioners is the city's geographical or sociological context. For him, the sociological reality can be described in three words: "alienation, fear, and violence."⁵⁹ He posits that "Alienation, fear, and violence" in urban contexts are relational symptoms of a far deeper issue that has been argued throughout history: the problem of evil. It is sufficient to emphasize that the phenomenon traditionally recognized as evil cannot be defined but has been described in various ways in terms of its effects and characteristics, as well as its uniqueness and disobedience to God. In general, the problem of evil is tied to how humanity interprets evil in its malevolent manifestations and spiritual deceptions.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Roger S. Greenway and Timothy M. Monsma, *Cities: Missions' New Frontier* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000), 96.

⁵⁹ Peters, *Urban ministry*, 4.

⁶⁰ Peters, *Urban ministry*, 9.

The reality of evil in the city itself presents challenges to the church's missionary activity.

A Lack of Strategic Leadership Approach to Urban Ministry

Leadership plays a crucial part in all aspects of ministry. The church's leadership has not been intentional or demonstrated a sufficient commitment to engage in urban missions. One could argue that urban ministry lacks strategic leadership direction. While the church is most effective in rural regions, it struggles in cities, where the majority of the population now resides.⁶¹ Again, many ministerial training institutes do not have a distinct curriculum for urban ministry. There are no specialists in the field. Moreover, little leadership development has been done to meet the potential, issues, and requirements of urban settings. The church conducts its urban mission using unprofessional approaches, which yield few results, interest, or efficiency. Ray Bakke has argued that:

Lamentably, we observe many single-strategy evangelizations for large cities. In these cases, the evangelists do not recognize the need for multiple responses to the urbanization of the world. God's people should seek to minister not only in the city but to it as well. Cities have inherited an unusual share of all our problems, and the problem of people who have dropped out of other places. Evangelism is most effective when the passion for evangelistic effectiveness is adorned with broad-ranging concerns and goals for the renewal of the whole of city life.⁶²

A close examination of Bakke's position indicates that more strategies for the municipal mission are still required. The city necessitates a varied approach to win it

⁶¹ Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World*, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 39.

⁶² Ray Bakke, *Evangelizing World Class Cities*, 1.

for God because of its diverse surroundings, cultural variety, shifting worldview, and many other aspects. According to a 2014 survey conducted by Rebecca Omwenga, Adventist leaders in Africa lack a comprehensive strategy for urban missions, despite their long experience in ministry. They frequently hold misconceptions regarding urban multiculturalism. This emphasizes the necessity for a comprehensive strategy for urban ministry.⁶³ It was observed that the main challenge arises from their failure to acknowledge the differences in the heterogeneous urban population. The social, cultural, political, educational, economic, and religious characteristics of urban dwellers probably differ from those of rural areas.⁶⁴ These differences require appropriate and relevant approaches to both rural and urban missions and are not the same.⁶⁵

Lack of Financial Resources

The approach presented in Luke 10:1-12 is challenging, especially when taken out of context for use in contemporary ministry. Jesus instructed the few laborers sent out at the time to carry no money bag, knapsack, or sandals, nor to greet anybody on their way, while lamenting the lack of workers for the fertile field. How could you begin on a quest like this without any resources, particularly money? While this is tough, Mark 6:12-13 describes a high level of accomplishment in this mission account, which focuses on healing the sick, casting out devils, and preaching the word of repentance.

⁶³ Rebecca Omwenga, "Adventist Leadership's Understanding of Urban Mission in Africa: Reflections from the Adventist University of Africa 2014 Cohorts," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 10, no. 2 (2014): 221-239.

⁶⁴ David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-culturally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1978), 51.

⁶⁵ Omwenga, "Adventist Leadership's Understanding of Urban Mission in Africa,"

However, Luke writes that women and other influential individuals contributed financially to Jesus' ministry (8:1-3; Acts cf. John 19:38-39), implying that financial resources were a significant component of Jesus' work. Jesus knew why he was asking them not to take those resources. Nonetheless, Ishola and Ugbedinma pose an intriguing question: if leaders and missionaries rely on God for spiritual guidance and support, must they go without resources when embarking on urban ministry? No, they answered. Research indicates that resource shortages hinder the attainment of goals in metropolitan settings. Funds impede successful urban management.”⁶⁶ According to Dan Sandoval, urban ministry needs resources in several areas, including managing dedicated volunteers, training staff, forming community partnerships, gaining access to facilities, arranging culturally relevant programs, handling social issues like addiction, poverty, and housing, and developing urban dynamics' capacities to effectively reach and serve a range of populations in an urban setting.⁶⁷

Cultural Hindrances

Cities embody multicultural dynamics where cultures can clash or seek harmony. This is reflected in biblical accounts, such as the exclusion of Hellenistic Jewish widows from food distribution in the early church (Acts 6:1). The apostles' intervention was crucial to prevent confusion that might have disrupted the church's ministry. Additionally, Paul confronted Peter in Antioch for his segregation behavior

⁶⁶ Jacob Ishola Olufemi and Evidence Ugbedinma Chinnedu, “Curbing Hindrances to Effective Urban Missions Through Transformational Leadership,” *The American Journal of Biblical Theology* 24, no. 21 (2023): 9.

⁶⁷ Dan Sandoval, “Reaching the Heart of the City the Street-smart Way: Strategic Principles for Urban Ministry” (DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2004), 39.

towards Gentiles, revealing a cultural bias when Peter chose to distance himself from them out of fear of the circumcised Jews (Gal 2:10-12).

Shockingly, Luke records how the Jews treated Paul when he came to Jerusalem with the Gentiles. He was accused of leading Gentiles into the Jerusalem temple and also asking Jews in the diaspora to forsake Moses (Acts 21:17-24, especially verses 20-24). He was then forced to perform some rituals to purge himself. The examples show how cultural differences affect ministry. With this, the church could no longer be culturally different. Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz posed certain critical concerns about the culture and urban ministry; if these queries are adequately addressed, many of the challenges of urban ministry may be mitigated. Given the social diversity, how will we identify leadership gifts in the world's cities? Where can we get culturally appropriate gifts that align with biblical principles? How will those abilities be verified in ministry? How will leadership training be carried out?⁶⁸

When education shifts away from formal schooling, the formal schooling model suffers significant disadvantages. Can mentoring escape the one-way view of learning, in which instruction is placed in student receptacles like money in a bank? How can we design mentoring models that do not affect the content of study?⁶⁹ Conn explains that urbanization led to a high number of immigrants and cultural shifts in all countries and centers of influence. People migrate in search of better opportunities, bringing with them their traditions and cultures, resulting in a complex tapestry of cultural interchange and tensions. The church's response to these new cultural

⁶⁸ Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City, and the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 143.

⁶⁹ Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City, and the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 143.

revolutions and the social vices that have emerged in major urban centers falls short of expectations.⁷⁰

Summary

In conclusion, the paper examines urban ministry, a Christian strategy that aims to understand God in metropolitan settings while also enhancing the quality of life as the gospel demands. Urban ministry faces challenges in a rapidly urbanized world, including diverse environments, a lack of strategic leadership, financial resources, cultural differences, and specialists to handle the urban ministry. To highlight its significance in a post-Christian era, where urban communities offer strategic leverage for ministry, the Seventh-day Adventist church should aim to develop 21st-century urban ministry strategies that involve collaboration, resource sharing, and community support to address physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Conclusion

To expand the church and keep up with the world's current urban trends, the church must re-evaluate its approach to urban ministry. However, dealing with these changes includes identifying problems that need attention to be fixed, as well as establishing a strategic plan on how to conduct ministry in cities and urban centers without jeopardizing the gospel's success.⁷¹

Omwenga noticed that Seventh-day Adventist leaders have access to a lot of counsel on urban ministry from Ellen White and have so many reasons to believe in

⁷⁰ Harvie M. Conn, *Looking at Some of Africa's Urban Challenges*, 32-33.

⁷¹ Kwame Bediako, a prominent evangelical theologian, indicates that the church in Africa must develop “a biblical and Christian viewpoint that sees these problems as opportunities for men and women of faith, with the help of God who is always working (John 5:17), to seek biblical solutions.” Tetsunao Yamamori, Bryant Myers, Kwame Bediako and Larry Reed, eds. *Serving with the Poor in Africa* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1996), 183.

the truths that have been given. He adds that the understanding of the African urban context depends upon the use they make of what they have.”⁷² With these, it is clear that leadership needs massive modern training and higher education about modern urban dynamics to know the best approach they must take to a particular urban centre for ministry-oriented programs.⁷³ Urban ministry has become an integral part of Christianity and must be welcomed by all parties. It is impossible to ignore the mandate given to us by scripture. Many changes have occurred in urban communities, ranging from the cultural, political, and post-industrialization revolutions to rural-urban migration, education, and the issues that come with it. When properly designed, urban ministry can have a significant positive impact on the Christian faith.

The Adventist Church has a long history of urban ministry, dating back to Ellen G. White's book "Country Living." Early Adventists advocated for rural living, viewing cities as Babylon. Originating in nineteenth-century America, they believed in small communities and independent farming. They travelled to villages, inviting families to schoolhouse sessions. Early Adventist urban ministry faced financial, anti-urban bias, and logistical limitations. Current programs like "Mission to the Cities" and "It is Time" are changing this trend. Christianity fosters multiculturalism, requiring churches to use theologically informed strategies to engage diverse communities through diverse communication methods, community culture, and local languages in worship services. The Adventist Church must aspire to establish a significant presence in urban communities.

⁷² Ibid., 227.

⁷³ Jacob Ishola Olufemi and Evidence Ugbedinma Chinnedu, "Curbing Hindrances to Effective Urban Missions Through Transformational Leadership," *The American Journal of Biblical Theology* 24, no. 21 (2023): 6.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology used in the study. It gives a clear and systematic approach for achieving the research objectives. The chapter covers the study area, research design, target population, research instruments, data gathering techniques, and data analysis methodologies. Each component is thoroughly described to show how the study was conducted in a reliable, legitimate, and ethical manner.

Ministry Context

This study was conducted in the urban community of Kwadaso District in the Kwadaso Municipal Assembly, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Kwadaso Municipality was carved out of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly and is located in the heart of the region. Its boundaries are: Atwima Nwabiagya South Municipal to the west, Atwima Nwabiagya North District to the east, Atwima Kwanwoma District to the south, and Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly to the north.¹

The Kwadaso Municipal Community is a multicultural community that includes middle-income earners, upper-class, and lower-class citizens. Its population, according to the 2023 national census, was 156,380.31. Based on a 1.2% growth rate and a 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC), the community's population was

¹ Ghana Districts, "Kwadaso Municipal," accessed 26 June 2024, <https://ghanadistricts.com/Home/District/218>.

154,526. According to the PHC, women account for the majority of the municipality's population.

Accounting for 51.33% of the total population.² Settlements represent greater intra-regional migration than inter-regional migration. As a result, the community is dominated by Akan-speaking people, with Twi being the prevalent language. Kwadaso municipality's residents have a distinct culture reflected in their dress code, preferred food (*fufu* as a staple dish), a common language, and a common funeral celebration pattern. As an Ashanti community, it is dominated by the Asante ethnic group, with sizable members from other ethnic groups. The people's unique culture is expressed in their daily lives through local rituals, food, herbal practitioners, and the items being sold in the market.³

The people culturally emphasize dignity, appropriate social behavior, and communal values, including respect for elders and traditional authorities. Kwadaso people place a high value on family responsibilities and relationships. Family responsibilities precede individual actions. Traditional leaders are respected and recognized for their leadership in community governance, and are supposed to maintain a positive reputation and act responsibly. They control the public affairs of the community.

² Ghana Statistical Service, "Population and Housing Census 2021," accessed October 27, 2025, <https://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/ghana-population-and-housing-census-2021>.

³ Ghana Districts, "Kwadaso Municipal."

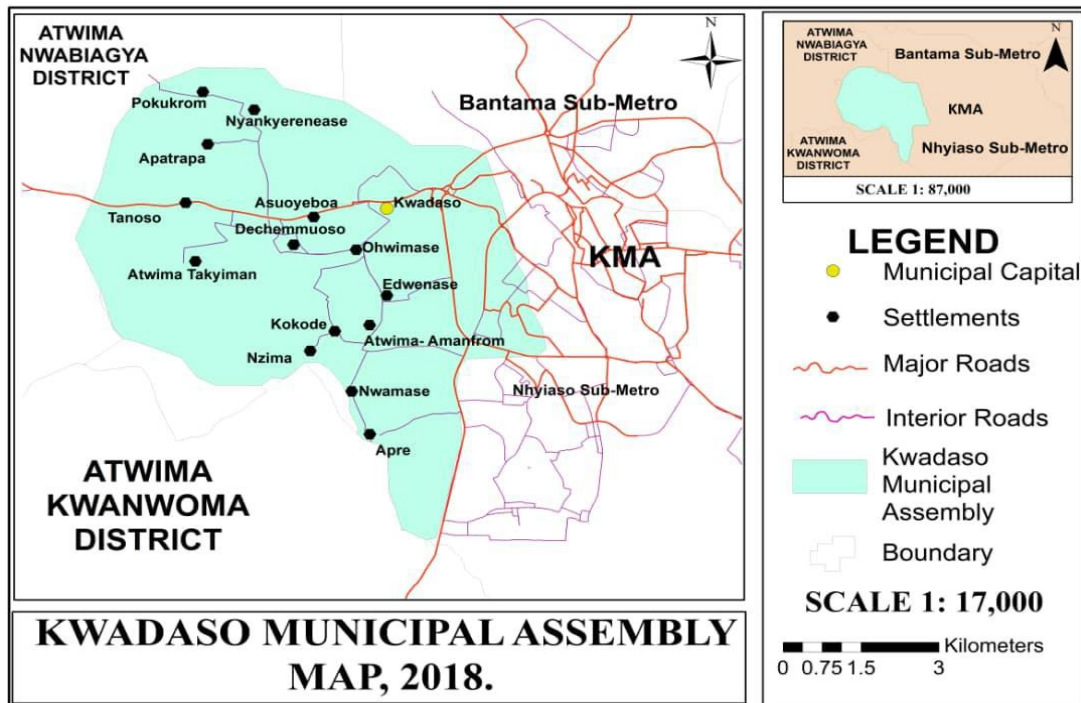


Figure 1. Map of the Location of the Kwadaso Municipality (emphasis original)

However, various social practices significantly influence people's lifestyles. Some social forms of identification in the community are detrimental to religious activities. Excessive funeral celebrations, entertainment, and other youth-related social vices, including drug misuse, aggression, robbery, violence, alcoholism, lack of discipline, etc., are common sources of concern. By and large, all of these have serious effects on individuals, the community, and the ministry in the community.⁴

Religious Affiliations in the Community

The people of Kwadaso Municipality belong to various religious groups. Less than one per cent (0.2%) are traditionalists, while over 32% are Protestants, including Adventists, Anglicans, Lutherans, and Presbyterians. Twelve per cent belong to other Christians, such as Pentecostal or Charismatic, and 11% are Catholic. Additionally,

⁴ Atta Kwanin, "Social Structures of Ghana, Unit 6: Session 1," accessed 6 November, 2024, <https://ioe.ucc.edu.gh/sites/default/files/2023-04/UNIT%206%20SOCIAL%20STRUCTURE%20OF%20GHANA.pdf>.

more than 3% of the population is not affiliated with any religion. This illustrates that religion has an impact on the local population. Nevertheless, these religious groups coexist peacefully in the municipality. There have never been religious conflicts or disturbances among these groups.

The Kwadaso neighbourhood has witnessed frequent missionary activities from all the mainline Protestant churches. In the past, Protestant churches turned to the community to carry out ministry in extraordinary circumstances. Most Protestant churches established their headquarters or centers of influence in the municipality. The community has the Seventh-day Adventist Conference headquarters (the first “Black Conference in Africa”) and a hospital. The Methodist Church has a retreat centre and a senior high school. While the Muslim and Presbyterian churches have community centers, the Roman Catholic Church has a Christian village.

Additionally, there are basic schools for almost all the denominations. All of these are aimed at the community mission and ministry. Pentecostals and Charismatics have recently been spotted all over the neighbourhood, attracting people's attention with their "prophetic, spiritualistic, and power encounter ministry." The Church of Pentecost established the Pentecost International Worship Centre (PIWC) to reach out to the community.⁵

Research Design and Appropriateness

According to Jeff Woods, research design is the project's road map that includes all the facts the reader and researcher need to know to comprehend what to expect at the conclusion of the study.⁶ These include assumptions the researcher

⁵ Ghana Districts, “Kwadaso Municipal.”

⁶ C. Jeff Woods, *Designing Religious Research Studies: From Passion to Procedures* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 59.

applies to the research, the research methodology, and particular research techniques for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data.

This research was entirely qualitative, using phenomenological concepts and methodology. The Encyclopedia of Research Design describes phenomenology as “the reflective study of pre-reflective or lived experience.”⁷ In other words, the phenomenology’s central element involves the study of "life unto itself" as it is wholly experienced, rather than how it is imagined, examined, classified, or thought about. Qualitative approaches have emerged as critical instruments for gaining profound insights into complicated phenomena. Qualitative research explores human experiences and perspectives, capturing settings and nuances that quantitative research may overlook. Engaging in qualitative research is more than just a methodological decision. It is a dedication to exploring the intricacies of social phenomena, enabling a researcher to engage with the subjective (personal) perspectives of their subjects.

A deeper comprehension of local dynamics is made possible by this method, which guarantees that the study is based on generally acknowledged community data. In order to investigate participants perspectives and evaluate and analyze their experiences, a narrative research methodology was also employed. By capturing the depth of their narratives, this approach enables a greater understanding of individual viewpoints.

Population of Study

The research focuses on members affiliated with the Adventist community, including mission stakeholders in the Kwadaso church, the Personal Ministry Director

⁷ Ruthellen Josselson, "Narrative Research," *Encyclopedia of Research Design*, ed. Neil J. Salkind (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2010), 869-874.

of the Central Ghana Conference, and focus groups outside the church. According to the Central Ghana Conference's membership records on the Adventist Church Management System (ACMS), the Kwadaso Church has 800 baptized members, with 50% being youth, 20% senior adults, and 30% middle-aged. Overall, 63% are women and 37% men.⁸ Only 15% are considered active and fully participate in the church's missionary activities. The study population is drawn from this 15% of active members.

Sampling Techniques and Size

De Vos define sampling as a component of the population that is assumed to be a part of the actual study.⁹ For this purpose, participants will be carefully selected using a purposeful sampling approach to ensure representation across various categories. According to Tim Sensing, purposeful sampling is a frequently used method in qualitative research. It is more effective for qualitative research because the researcher relies on selecting information from rich sources that can provide depth to the data obtained.¹⁰ Creswell believes that a phenomenological study should have six to eight interviewees per group, depending on the size of the community.¹¹ Nonetheless, Morse's proposal specified a minimum of six (6) interviewees for extensive sessions.¹²

⁸ ACMS, 2025, CGHC, Kumasi, Ghana.

⁹ A. S. De Vos, *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Services Profession*, 3rd ed. (Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik Publishers, 2005), 194.

¹⁰ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Whiff and Stock Publishers, 2011), 83.

¹¹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approach* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), 282.

¹² Janice M. Morse, "Critical Analysis of Strategies for Determining Rigor in Qualitative Inquiry," *Qualitative Health Research* 25, no. 9 (2015): 1212-1222.

The researcher would conduct two (2) focus group interviews, consisting of six participants, with three from each group. The group will consist of three members from the Seventh-day Adventist church and three members who are not Adventists. The three non-Adventists would have diverse cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and jobs. The diverse backgrounds of the focus group participants will enrich the discussions and provide a fuller picture of the issue. The researcher intends to gather comprehensive data from Seventh-day Adventist church members who have participated in Adventist ministry in the communities, as well as non-Adventist people who have resided there for at least ten years. Additionally, the researcher will conduct purposeful or structured interviews with three leaders in the SDA church in Kwadaso: the pastor, the personal ministry leader, and the elder. Unstructured interviews will also be held with the director of the Conference Personal Ministries Department (PM).

Instruments for Data Collection

Data collection, analysis, and interpretation are essential aspects of this study. The researcher will use the following instruments to collect data: a purposeful or structured interview guide, an unstructured interview guide, and a focus group interview guide, along with both close and open-ended questions. Data analyzes with documentary review. Tim Sensing believes that using open-ended questions in qualitative research is preferable because respondents provide more nuanced and natural feedback and are also easier to organize.¹³

It is essential to collect data in a fair, informative, and instructive manner, through voice recording and note-taking. Again, the interview guide for individual

¹³ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Whip and Stock Publishers, 2011), 93.

interviews will include different questions from those of the two focus groups. The researcher believes that employing alternative questions to interview persons outside of the focus group will help provide an additional perspective.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research, regardless of the field of study, are crucial and should be handled professionally because individuals' integrity should be valued. According to Tim Sensing, ethics is concerned with the concepts of good and wrong. Such moral questions include what it means to be honorable, to embrace virtue, to commit virtuous acts, to generate goodwill, and to choose justice over injustice.¹⁴ To meet ethical standards, the researcher will inform participants about why and how the data or information they provide will be used. This explanation should be completed before the information is collected. Ethical issues will be addressed throughout this research, from setting objectives, the research design phase, communicating with respondents, maintaining respondents' data, citing sources, and abstaining from delving into sensitive topics or avoiding personal prejudice.

To ensure that the information obtained is presented accurately, objectively, and without bias, the researcher will maintain a neutral attitude throughout the research process, including observing participants. According to Sensing, through interactions with the participants, the researcher could enhance relationships, ideas, norms, habits, and practices.¹⁵ Woods highlights that the researcher should present data so that the reader feels like a participant in the data collection.¹⁶ Before

¹⁴ Ibid., 120.

¹⁵ Ibid., 121.

¹⁶ Woods, *Designing Religious Research Studies*, 100.

conducting the research, the researcher will obtain clearance from the Adventist University of Africa's Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee, as well as the necessary approval and authorization from the Central Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, where the local church under study is located. Furthermore, all participants will be fully informed that the research is solely for educational purposes, that their participation is entirely voluntary, and that they have the right to opt out at any point throughout the study if they so choose.

Data Analysis

The data analysis is sophisticated and crucial, to reveal the underlying meanings of responses. The data analysis in this study uses both interpretative and descriptive methods to discover how participants perceive and interpret the phenomenon. Researcher works closely with obtained data to deduce opinions. Important stages in the process include data preparation, reading and reflection, coding, categorization, and theme development.

The approach places a strong emphasis on documenting and describing concepts of the phenomenon while preserving participant perspectives and/or voices. Each question was considered a category, and the focus group participants' answers were coded under each one. The answers provided by the other participants were expanded upon under the questions that they responded. Before moving on to a more interpretive or conceptual level, data analysis enables the researcher to start at a descriptive level regarding the participants' viewpoints.

Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the suitability of any research value, tools, methods, and other processes, including data collection and validation.¹⁷ Validity also determines the soundness of the methodology, sampling process, data analysis process, and study conclusion.¹⁸ Reliability refers to the consistency, stability, and repeatability of a respondent's statements, as well as the researcher's ability to collect and record information. It requires consistent results from a study method over multiple testing periods, and appropriate management of individual testing method-related aspects.¹⁹

Integration of methods. In qualitative research, methods should be integrated. Detailed and vivid descriptions that clarify the findings and relate them to the research objectives enhance both their reliability and validity and increase stakeholders' acceptance and participation.

Complementary Insights and Output. The study's findings will provide a more in-depth knowledge of the strategy for reaching urban communities in the Kwadaso district.

Presentation of the Data and Discussion of the Findings

The results will be presented using assertions. Readers should be able to comprehend the precise results for the research questions the study attempted to address by reading assertions or statements that clearly describe what the findings are in relation to a research question. The way the results are presented shows that the

¹⁷ Mimi Mahaffy Mohamad, Nor Lisa Suleiman, Lai Chee Serf and Kairos Mold Salleh, "Measuring the Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments," *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 204 (2015): 164–171, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.08.129>

¹⁸ Nahid Golisano, "Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research," *The Qualitative Report* 8, no. 4 (2003): 597–607, <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2003.1870>

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 597–607.

analytical justifications for those answers were carefully considered. The results also consider the design, methodology, instruments, research questions, and goal of the study. C. Roofe, T. Ferguson-Murry, and Hunter quote Nolen and Talbert to define an assertion as a claim that aims to carefully involve the reader inside the study's framework.²⁰

²⁰ Carmel Roofe, Therese Ferguson-Murray, and Shereca McGowan-Hunter, *A Practical Guide to the Presentation of Qualitative Research Findings: A Manual to Support the Work of the Association of Graduate Researchers in Education (AGRE)* (Kingston, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies, 2023), 4.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of data collected for the study titled “Exploring Effective Mission Strategies for Reaching Out to the Urban Communities in Kwadaso District, Kumasi, Ghana.” The chapter explains the data collection process and outlines how the results are organized for presentation and interpretation. The chapter also aims to explore how the findings address the research objectives and questions while connecting them to relevant literature and theological frameworks.

Statement of Research Objectives and Questions

The research aims to explore mission strategies that could adequately empower the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in the Kwadaso District to engage and reach out to the rapidly urbanizing communities of Kwadaso. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the existing mission strategies being employed by the SDA Church within the Kwadaso District.
2. Explore the challenges impeding the effective running of the current urban outreach programs.
3. Propose a contextualized and holistic mission strategies that are consistent with the urban community.

Based on the above objectives, the research questions guiding this study are

1. What are some of the mission strategies that the SDA Church is using in reaching the Kwadaso urban communities?
2. What are the factors that offset or challenge the effectiveness of current urban mission strategies of the Church?
3. What new or modified mission strategy can be proposed to effectively reach and engage the residents within the Kwadaso District?

According to N. Hiebert James, Jinfa Cai, Stephen Hwang, Anne K. Morris, and Charles Hohensee, revisiting research questions will form the basis of analysis on how data collected in research sheds light on both challenges and opportunities that exist.¹ Bosch also asserts that restating research questions ensures that analyses remain aligned with the purpose and theoretical framework of context, theological mission, and urban ministry.²

Summary of Data Collection Process

The data used in this study were collected using a qualitative phenomenological design. Creswell and Poth argue that phenomenological design is suitable for investigating the lived experiences and perceptions of mission participants.³ The design explores how SDA ministers, elders, and members practice and conceptualize mission work in such an urban setting.

¹ James Hiebert, Jinfa Cai, Stephen Hwang, Anne K. Morris, and Charles Hohensee, "Significance of a Study: Revisiting the "So What" Question," in *Doing Research: A New Researcher's Guide* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 105-124.

² David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, no. 16 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011).

³ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2017).

Sampling and Participants

Participants were selected using purposive sampling that included a variety of stakeholders who could provide relevant experiences. The sample included a pastor, an elder, a departmental leader, a personal ministries director, and non-Adventist members within the Kwadaso District. Their perceptions reflect both leadership perspectives and grassroots realities, hence enhancing the validity of the findings.

Methods of Data Collection

Three major techniques were employed:

Semi-structured Interviews. It involved four (4) individual interviews to get detailed narratives on existing mission practices, challenges experienced, and proposed improvements. This method allowed flexibility in probing for a deeper understanding.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Two focus group sessions were held with church members and non-Adventist members, involving a total of 6 participants, to gather their collective insights into the mission experiences and potential strategies. Such discussions allow for interaction and reflection on shared realities within the community.

Document Review. Church mission reports, annual records, and related denominational publications were analyzed to validate interview and FGD data. Such triangulation enhances the credibility of the findings.⁴

⁴ Branda Nowell and Kate Albrecht, "A Reviewer's Guide to Qualitative Rigor," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 29, no. 2 (2019): 348-363.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

All interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded, transcribed, and coded for thematic analysis. Following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework,⁵ themes were inductively developed from the data, capturing repeated ideas on existing mission strategies, challenges, and proposed interventions. The coding and categorization were supported by NVivo software, while consistency checks were performed manually. The NVivo software has demonstrated its versatility by offering multiple options for data exploration across various tabs. Users could create file associations and display them in word clouds, hierarchies, and clusters.⁶ The explanations of insights and experiences shared by participants were conducted through a phenomenological lens to connect with the theology and mission frameworks of the context. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring voluntary participation.

Chapter Organization

This chapter has been organized into major sections to ensure that the issues are presented and discussed systematically:

- Section 5.1 presents a demographic profile for the respondents that includes age, gender, educational background, church role, and years of experience in ministry.

⁵ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Toward Good Practice in Thematic Analysis: Avoiding Common Problems and Be(com)ing a Knowing Researcher," *International Journal of Transgender Health* 24, no. 1 (2023): 1-6.

⁶ Helen Elliott-Mainwaring, "Exploring Using NVivo Software to Facilitate Inductive Coding for Thematic Narrative Synthesis," *British Journal of Midwifery* 29, no. 11 (2021): 628-632.

- Section 5.2 below presents the different mission strategies that are in use presently by the SDA Church in Kwadaso, indicating their various strengths and weaknesses.
- Section 5.3 looks at some of the major barriers to effective urban outreach and ministry.
- Section 5.4 provides an assessment of the impacts, sustainability, and best practices of selected past mission activities.
- Section 5.5 provides data-driven and theologically grounded mission strategies offered by participants for effectively ministering to the urban setting.
- Section 5.6 integrates the empirical findings with the relevant theological and missiological literature to express the link between theory and practice.
- Section 5.7 concludes by summarizing the major insights leading to Chapter Six, which presents the conclusions and recommendations.

Thus, the chapter progresses in an orderly and logical way from descriptive analysis to interpretive synthesis. There is coherence in how the empirical findings link up with the theological grounds of mission. Moreover, accuracy has been paid heed to, and a clear path toward constructing a practical and contextually relevant mission strategy has been covered.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic features of respondents who participated in the study. According to Creswell and Co., understanding the demographic profile of participants is essential in qualitative research, as it provides contextual grounding for interpreting participants' experiences, perspectives, and

insights related to the topic.⁷ The total number of respondents in this study is ten.

There were four expert respondents: the district pastor, the elder, the district Personal Ministries Leader, and the Conference Personal Ministries Director. There were also six focus group participants: three church members and three members from the community.

The selection method aims at gathering a balanced view of the entire community involved in missions. According to Christian Von Soest, in qualitative research, researchers can swiftly adapt to the interview setting and provide follow-up questions when speaking to experts.⁸ He emphasizes that speaking to experts leads to high validity. Being "in the field" also makes it easier to gather thorough information with purposeful sampling. Nevertheless, the first stage of qualitative expert interviews is the balanced selection of "inside" and "outside" experts.⁹

Respondents Role in Mission

Table 1 presents respondents roles in relation to the church and the community mission work.

Table 1. Respondents Role

Respondent Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
District Pastor	1	10.0
Church Elder	1	10.0
Personal Ministries Leader	1	10.0
Conference Personal Ministries Director	1	10.0
Church Members (FGD 1)	3	30.0
Non-Church Community Members (FGD 2)	3	30.0
Total	10	100.0

⁷ Creswell and Poth. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 45.

⁸ Christian Von Soest, "Why Do We Speak to Experts? Reviving the Strength of the Expert Interview Method," *Perspectives on Politics* 21, no. 1 (2023): 277-287.

⁹ Christian Von Soest, "Why Do We Speak to Experts? Reviving the Strength of the Expert Interview Method," *Perspectives on Politics* 21, no. 1 (2023): 277-287.

The table indicates that 40% of respondents were church leaders directly involved in mission planning and implementation, while 60% were community-level participants drawn from both within and outside the church. This roles distribution strengthened the study’s credibility by allowing triangulation between leadership perspectives and lived community experiences. According to Sarwar Eric, to offer the data additional rigor, breadth, and complexity, triangulation is advised. Triangulation is the use of many methods.¹⁰

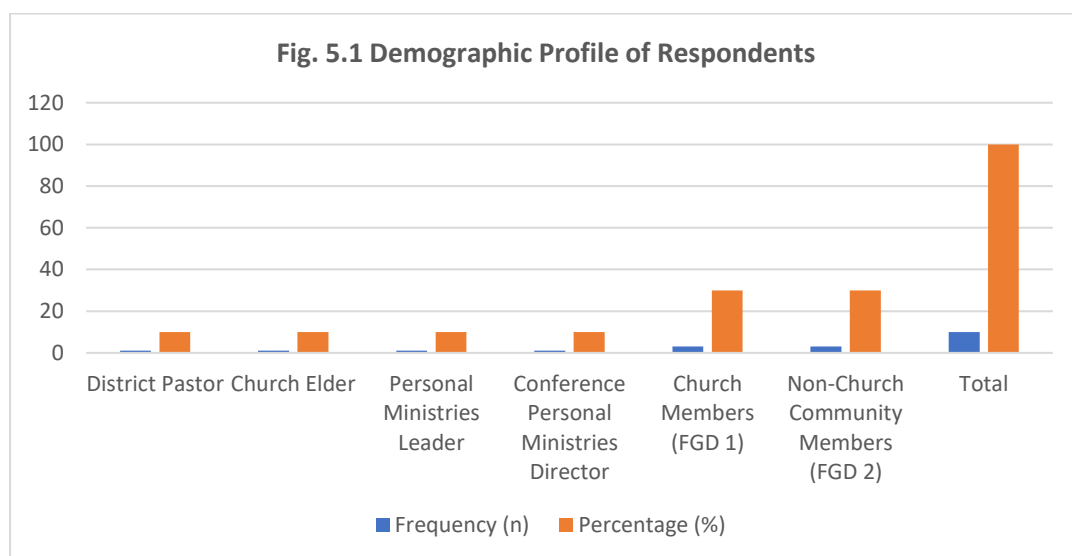


Figure 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender representation was considered to ensure inclusive and to reflect the diversity of voices within the urban mission context as shown in Table 2 and Figure 3.

¹⁰ Eric Sarwar, *Psalms, Islam, and Salam: The Punjabi Psalter as Public Witness in Pakistan* (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2021).

Table 2. Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	6	60.0
Female	4	40.0
Total	10	100.0

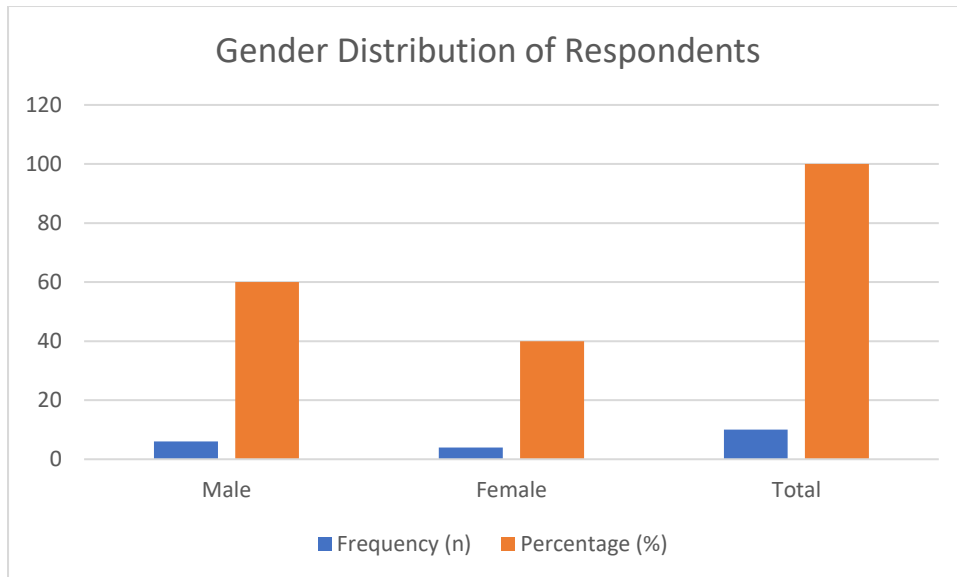


Figure 3. Gender Distribution of Respondents

From the data, there seems to be an over representation of men (60%) to women (40%) in the sample group. This was in line with the gender composition in top church leadership in a typical Ghanaian church environment, where female dominate the membership, men are leaders. Gender diversity in mission dynamics is useful in capturing different experiences men and women have in urban religious engagement.¹¹

¹¹ Mookgo S. Kgatle, "Encountering African Pentecostalism: Methodologies and Evolving Tendencies," In *African Pentecostalism from African Perspectives: Volume 1: Methods*, eds. Ezra Chitando, Lovemore Togarasei, and Loreen Maseno (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature 2024), 77-91.

Age Distribution of Respondents

Age distribution was analyzed to capture generational perspectives on mission as shown in Table 3 and Figure 4.

Table 3. Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group (Years)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
18–30	3	30.0
31–45	4	40.0
46–60	3	30.0
Total	10	100.0

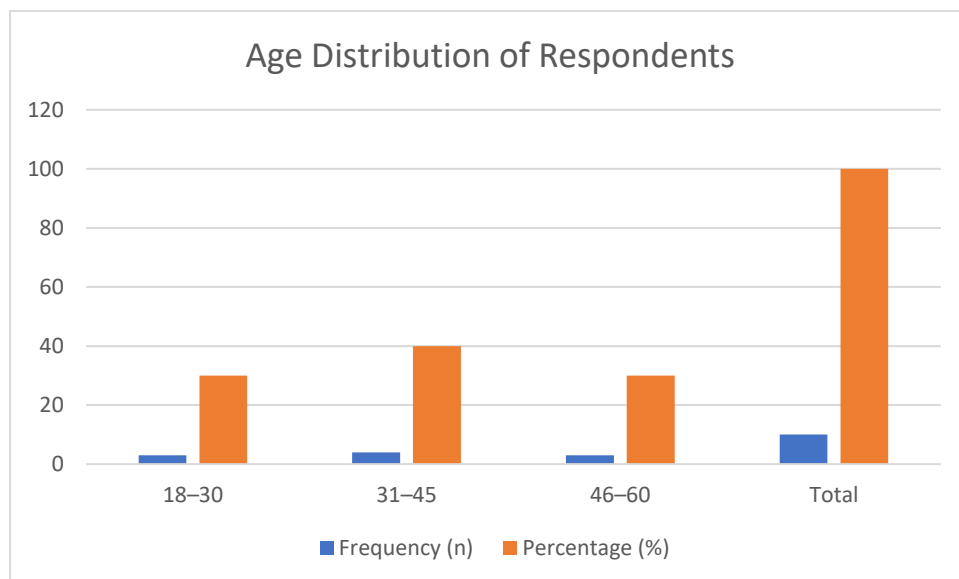


Figure 4. Age Distribution of Respondents

According to the data, the majority of respondents (40%) were between the ages of 31 and 45. There were an equal number of respondents aged 18 to 30 and 46 to 60. That was a fair distribution of age groups that would bring together the perspectives of young people, middle-aged people, and experienced members of society, all of whom play an important part in developing a mission plan for urban realities.

Educational Background of Respondents

According to Table 4 and Figure 5 educational level was examined because education influences worldview, emphasizes diverse approaches in engaging people. According to Scheerder Anique J., Alexander Jam, and Jan Dijk, educational attainment frequently influences social inequality, and differences in educational background influence outcomes favorably or unfavorably.¹²

Table 4. Educational Background of Respondents

Educational Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Secondary Education	3	30.0
Diploma/HND	3	30.0
Bachelor's Degree	2	20.0
Postgraduate Degree	2	20.0
Total	10	100.0

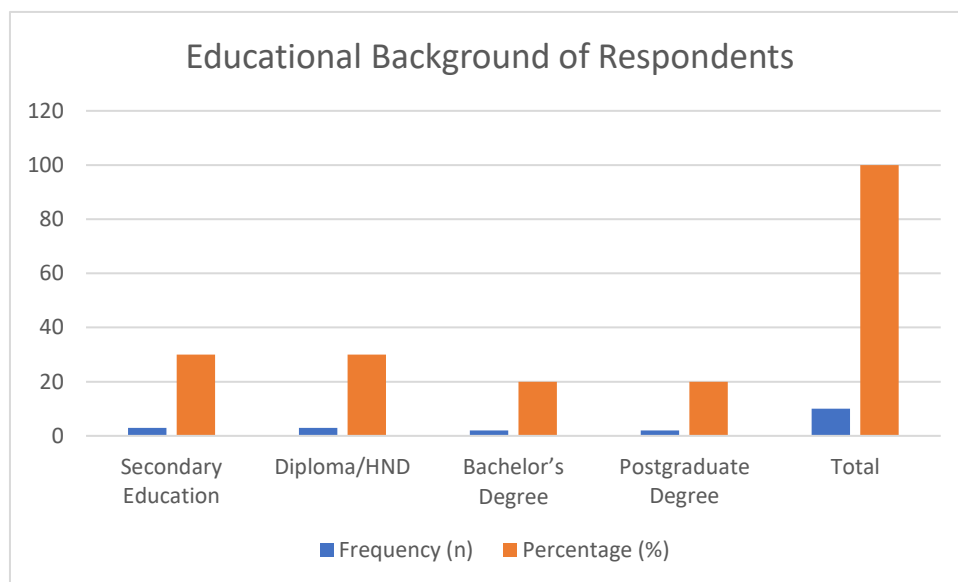


Figure 5. Educational Background of Respondents

¹² Anique J. Scheerder, Alexander J. A. M. van Deursen, and Jan A. G. M. van Dijk, "Taking Advantage of the Internet: A Qualitative Analysis to Explain Why Educational Background is Decisive in Gaining Positive Outcomes," *Poetics* 80 (2020): 101426.

A relatively high educational profile is consistent with urban environments such as Kwadaso. This enhances the reliability of respondents' reflections on mission strategies, leadership challenges, and contextualization. The data reveal that 70% of respondents had post-secondary education, with 40% possessing bachelor's or postgraduate qualifications.

Years in Church or Community

The length of involvement in church or community activities was considered to assess respondents' experiential depth as shown in Table 5 and Figure 6.

Table 5. Years in Church or Community

Years of Engagement	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Less than 5 years	3	30.0
5–10 years	4	40.0
More than 10 years	3	30.0
Total	10	100.0

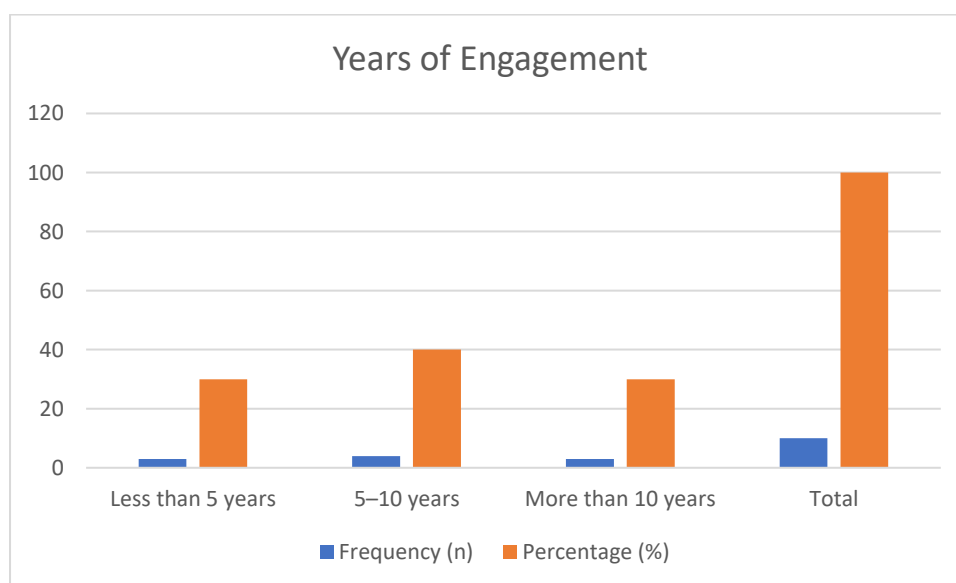


Figure 6. Years in Church or Community

The results show that 70% of respondents had more than five years of engagement in either church leadership, congregational life, or community residency. This level of experience provided informed and reflective insights into the strengths and weaknesses of existing mission approaches in the Kwadaso urban context. As a conclusion, the demographic factors of respondents show a well-balanced and adequately focused sample within qualitative research focusing on urban mission strategy.

Engaging leaders and followers, as well as others from the community who do not attend the church, covering the widest range of ages, education, and experience, contributed to the validity of the research findings.

Analysis of Existing Mission Strategies of the SDA Church in Kwadaso

This section presents an in-depth analysis of the existing mission strategies employed by the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in the Kwadaso District. The analysis is based on qualitative data obtained from two focus group discussions (FGDs): one comprising three active church members and the other consisting of three non-church members residing within the Kwadaso urban area. The focus group approach provided rich, contextual insights into both internal church perspectives and external community perceptions of the church's mission practices. The analysis is organized thematically to reflect the dominant mission strategies identified from the data and to highlight their perceived effectiveness within the urban context.

Public Evangelistic Campaigns

Findings from both focus groups revealed that public evangelistic campaigns remain the most dominant mission strategy employed by the SDA Church in Kwadaso. Church members described these campaigns as highly visible and resource-

intensive, often involving guest speakers, extended preaching sessions, and community-wide publicity. One church member noted, “Public campaigns are our main outreach method. They draw many people, especially when the preacher is well known.”

However, despite recognizing the crowd-drawing power of the public campaigns, the church members felt that they had very short-term effectiveness, especially in terms of sustained church attendance and disciple-making. Some current studies on urban missions raise concerns about secularism hampering evangelism.¹³ Non-church participants confirmed awareness of these Adventist public campaigns. Still, they indicated that attendance was often driven by curiosity rather than spiritual commitment: “Sometimes we attend to listen, but after the program, life continues as usual.” This suggests that while public campaigns increase perception, they may not adequately address the deeper relational and existential needs of urban residents, a challenge widely documented in contemporary studies of urban missions. James Butler claims that evangelism is primarily carried out from a “didactic” perspective to impart a normative understanding of religion. It is now more difficult to incorporate informal and nonverbal expressions into an evangelistic narrative due to didactic evangelism.¹⁴

Community Health Programs

Another prominent mission strategy identified was community health programs, including free medical screenings, health talks, and sanitation exercises.

¹³ Brian Murahwa, "Migrant Pentecostal Churches and the Transformation of Urban Space in Johannesburg" (PhD diss., University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2021), 21.

¹⁴ James Butler, "The Pedagogy of Evangelism: Moving from a Didactic to a Conversational Model of Evangelism," *Mission Studies* 39, no. 1 (2022): 95-116.

Church members emphasized that these programs were effective in creating goodwill and fostering trust between the community and the church.

One participant explained, “When we do health screening, people feel the church cares for them, even if they don’t attend church.”

Non-church participants strongly affirmed the value of health outreach programs, describing them as the most tangible expressions of the church’s concern for community well-being: “The health programs are helpful. They meet our needs without forcing religion on us.” Nonetheless, in both groups, there was a recognition of the lack of connection between outreach and spiritual follow-up. Such initiatives were sometimes done as separate events with the intention of integration into discipleship journeys. Myers and Bongmba highlight that for a mission to be influential, there must be a connection between social actions and spiritual nurturing.¹⁵

House-to-House Visitation and Personal Evangelism

House-to-house visitation and personal evangelism were also identified as traditional mission strategies employed in the district. Church members described these approaches as biblically grounded and relational but increasingly difficult to implement in an urban setting. One church member observed, “People are not comfortable receiving visitors at home. Security and time are major issues.” Non-Adventist participants expressed the same sentiment, repeating that city dwellers care much about privacy, security, and trust. This aligns with Njogu and Nthamburi’s findings on the broader trends in African urbanization, where increased urban density,

¹⁵ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (New York: Orbis Books, 2011); Elias Kifon Bongmba, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology* (London: Routledge, 2020), 97.

security concerns, and time pressures reduce the effectiveness of door-to-door evangelism.¹⁶

Literature Evangelism

Literature evangelism, the distribution of tracts and books, was mentioned primarily by church members as a supportive strategy. While recognized for its historical significance within the SDA Church, as enforced by the General Conference (GC), participants expressed doubts about its relevance in a digitally driven urban environment. A church participant stated, “Many people don’t read tracts anymore. They prefer information on their phones.” Non-church members confirmed this shift in information consumption, highlighting the dominance of digital media in urban life. Adeboyo observes that reliance on printed-material evangelism alone is increasingly ineffective among urban populations, particularly youth and professionals.¹⁷

Digital Evangelism

Both focus groups identified digital evangelism as an underutilized mission strategy in the Kwadaso District. Church members acknowledged that while some efforts exist, such as WhatsApp Bible texts or announcements, there is no structured digital mission framework. One church member noted: “We know digital evangelism is important, but we lack training and resources.” Non-church participants strongly emphasized the importance of digital engagement: “Most people spend time online. If

¹⁶ Samuel Njogu and Zablon Nthamburi, “Contextual Theology and Missional Praxis in African Urban Settings,” *International Review of Mission* 109, no. 1 (2020): 81–98.

¹⁷ Olufunke Adeboye, “Explaining the Growth and Legitimation of the Pentecostal Movement in Africa,” in *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa*, ed. Adeshina Afolayan, Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso, Toyin Falola (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 25–39.

the church wants to reach us, it must be there.” This gap between awareness and implementation reflects a wider challenge within African churches adapting digital mission opportunities in urban contexts.¹⁸

Summary of Findings from the Focus Groups

Upon evaluating current mission tactics, it is clear that the SDA Church in Kwadaso employs several traditional approaches that are not wholly suitable for urban ministry. Public evangelism and health outreach are still significant and cherished, but these are marred by a lack of strong “follow-ups” and contacts, either with technology or personally. The respondents' perspectives, while insightful, highlight criticisms regarding traditional mission strategies.

Factors Hindering the Effectiveness of Urban Mission Strategies

This section examines perspectives from Focus Group Discussions (FGD) in the Kwadaso District of Kumasi. It focuses on factors militating against the efficacy of the urban mission method. Two discussions were held: one with three church members and another with three community members from the Kwadaso, providing a comprehensive understanding of internal and external challenges faced by the mission strategy.

Secularization and Competing Urban Lifestyles

A dominant theme emerging from both FGDs was the increasing influence of secularization and competing urban lifestyles on religious activities. Church members noted that many urban residents prioritize work, business, education, and entertainment over spiritual activities. One church member stated, “In the city, people

¹⁸ Kgatle, "Encountering African Pentecostalism," 77-91.

are always busy. Even church members struggle to attend programs because of work, trading, or school.”

Similarly, non-church members emphasized that urban life offers numerous alternatives that compete with church programs: “Many things are happening in town, such as day-to-day football games, social events, and entertainment. Church is not always the first option.” These findings are consistent with Bongmba's study, which reveals that urban life fosters secular worldviews and diminishes conventional religious devotion, especially among young and working adults.¹⁹ The implication for mission work is that traditional time-intensive evangelistic programs struggle to attract consistent participation in urban settings.

Lack of Contextualization of the Gospel Message

Another key barrier to urban strategies is the notion that preaching and outreach methods lack contextual relevance. Members responding believe that sermons do not effectively address the everyday realities of urban dwellers. An elder remarked, “Sometimes the messages are too general. Urban people want to hear how faith applies to stress, finances, family problems, and work pressure.” This concern was echoed by non-church participants: “The preaching doesn’t always relate to our real life, like rent, job stress, and relationships. That’s why many people don’t stay.” Adeboye, in his submission on urban mission, emphasizes that failure to contextualize the gospel to address socio-economic and psychological pressures of city life significantly reduces mission effectiveness.²⁰

¹⁹ Elias Kifon Bongmba, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology* (London: Routledge, 2020), 78.

²⁰ Adeboye, "Explaining the Growth and Legitimation of the Pentecostal Movement in Africa," 2018

Weak Follow-Up and Discipleship Systems

Both focus groups identified weak follow-up mechanisms as a major hindrance to sustaining mission impact. Church members noted that while evangelistic campaigns and outreach programs attract initial interest, there are limited follow-ups to contact and nurture converts. A church youth observed: “After campaigns or health programs, we collect contacts, but most of them are not followed up on.” Non-church participants confirmed this perception: “People come for health screening or programs, but nobody visits or checks on them later.” This finding is consistent with research, which highlights poor post-evangelism discipleship as a critical weakness in many African urban churches.²¹ Without intentional follow-up, initial evangelistic gains often fail to translate into long-term commitment and church growth.

Partial Use of Digital and Media Platforms

The partial and inconsistent use of digital platforms for mission work emerged as another significant barrier. Church members, particularly the youth, indicated that the church has not fully embraced digital evangelism despite the high digital presence of urban residents. A youth participant stated: “Most young people are online, but the church is not very active on social media for evangelism.” Non-church members confirmed the importance of digital platforms: “If the church wants to reach people like us, they must be online, such as on WhatsApp, Facebook, and short videos.” A study by Campbell identifies digital media as a critical mission field in urban

²¹ Njogu and Nthamburi, “Contextual Theology and Missional Praxis in African Urban Settings,” 81–98.

contexts, especially among younger populations.²² The findings indicate that inadequate digital engagement has restricted the church's ability to reach and sustain contact with urban dwellers in Kwadaso.

Low Member Participation and Leadership Fatigue

Low participation of church members in mission activities and leadership fatigue were also identified as internal challenges. Church members noted that a small group of burnout leaders often carries the burden of mission work. One participant explained: "The same few people do all the work. Many members are willing but say they are too busy." This observation corroborates studies suggesting that urban churches frequently encounter challenges in volunteer mobilization owing to rigorous metropolitan work schedules and inadequate lay training.²³ Leadership fatigue further reduces the sustainability of mission initiatives.

The Church Perceived as an Inward-Looker (Focused)

Non-church participants expressed that the church is sometimes perceived as inward-focused and disconnected from the broader community. One non-church participant noted: "Sometimes the church is only concerned about its members, not the whole community." This perception undermines the church's mission credibility and aligns with Myers' assertion that churches that fail to engage in holistic community transformation lose relevance in urban contexts.²⁴

²² Heidi A. Campbell, *Digital creatives and the rethinking of religious authority* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

²³ Kgatle, "Encountering African Pentecostalism," 77-91.

²⁴ Myers, *Walking with the Poor*.

In conclusion, the focus group discussions indicate that many factors affect the effectiveness of urban mission strategies in the Kwadaso District. These include secularization, lack of contextualized communication, poor follow-up, limited online interaction, low member participation, leadership burnout, and others. These issues must be resolved to build a successful urban mission strategy.

Evaluation of Past Mission Outcomes

This section evaluates the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Kwadaso District's past urban mission outcomes. The evaluation would be based on the results of two focus group discussions (FGDs). Each group will include three individuals. One group would have three church members, and the other group's members would be selected from the community. Again, church mission reports and archived information would be reviewed from 2019 to 2024. The goal of this evaluation was to assess the efficacy and community impact of strategies used, as well as to identify gaps that would inform the proposal of more contextualized mission strategies for urban outreach.

Perceived Results of Past Urban Mission Programs

Participants in both focus groups were requested to think back on the visible results of past urban mission programs, including public evangelistic campaigns, health outreach, or other community programs. Findings show a mixed attitude toward the effectiveness, with some variance between the two respondents. Church members believe that while past mission outreach initiatives were successful in the short term, there are questions about their long-term efficacy, especially in relation to attendance and discipleship. Participants who are not Adventists recognize the

church's beneficial influence on community health efforts, but they do not believe that this has a major impact on the community's commitment to the church.

Table 6. Outcomes of Past Urban Mission Programs (FGDs)

Mission Outcome	Church Members (n=3)	Non-church Members (n=3)	Overall %
Increased community awareness of the church	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	100%
High attendance during evangelistic campaigns	3 (100%)	2 (66.7%)	83.3
Positive impact of health outreach programs	2 (66.7%)	3 (100%)	83.3
Sustained church attendance after programs	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	16.7
Improved community–church relationships	2 (66.7%)	2 (66.7%)	66.7
Long-term spiritual transformation	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	16.7

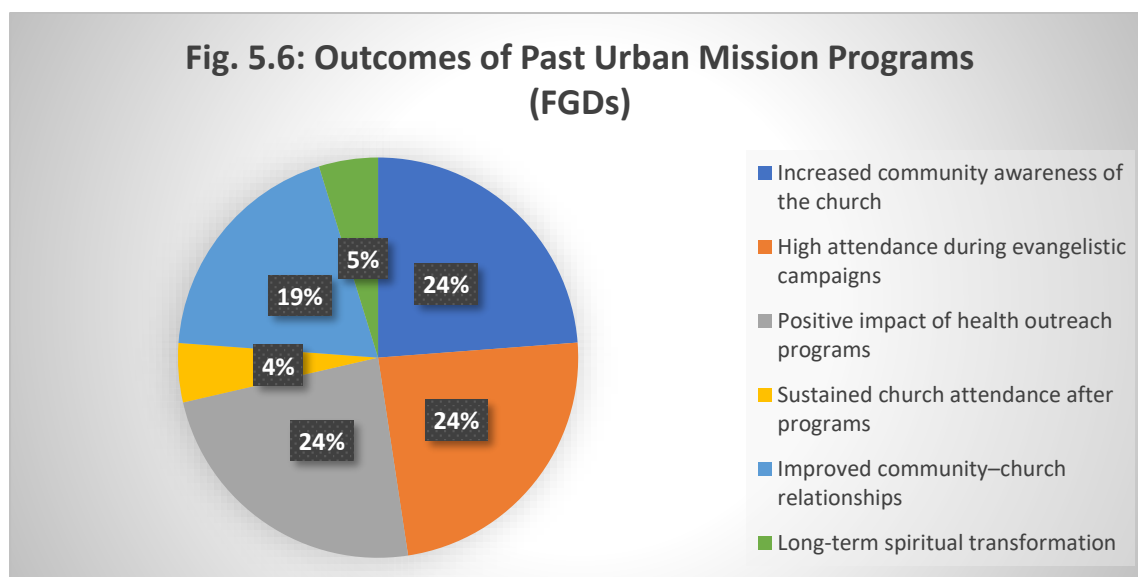


Figure 7. Outcomes of Past Urban Mission Programs (FGDs)

The data indicate that while 100% of participants acknowledged increased community awareness and positive reception of health outreach programs, only 16.7% perceived evidence of sustained church attendance or long-term spiritual

transformation. These findings suggest that past mission efforts have been more effective in attraction and prominence than in retention and discipleship. This is a challenge commonly reported in Myers’ urban mission study.²⁵

Comparison with Church Reports and Archival Records

Focus group perceptions were validated by evaluating church mission reports, evangelism statistics, and Kwadaso District archive data between 2019 and 2024. Findings indicated that while public campaigns attracted large numbers of attendees, with reports reaching hundreds per event, church baptism records and retention rates revealed that very few attendees became active church members or were retained beyond six months.

Table 7. Comparison of Mission Outcomes and Church Records

Mission Indicator	FGD Perception (%)	Church Records (2019–2024)
High attendance at evangelistic events	83.3	Confirmed (High attendance recorded annually)
Positive community response to health outreach	83.3	Confirmed (Repeated health programs documented)
Increase in baptisms after programs	33.3	Partially confirmed (Low baptism figures relative to attendance)
Long-term member retention: 16.7% retention	16.7	Confirmed low retention within 3–6 months
Structured follow-up mechanisms	33.3	Limited documentation of follow-up systems

²⁵ Myers, *Walking with the Poor*

The convergence between participants' perceptions and documentary evidence strengthens the credibility of the findings. Similar trends have been reported in recent studies on urban missions in Africa, which note that event-based evangelism often lacks the relational depth in the long-term.²⁶

Synthesis and Implications

Analysis of the data findings from the focus group and other documents shows a clear trend:

- a) Existing mission programs in the Kwadaso area have triumph in creating awareness and short-term interest, with little success in creating long-term spiritual development.
- b) It was clear that there was a lack of integration in the mission approaches used compared with the life circumstances in the district.
- c) The results suggest that the church needs to think less in terms of events and more in terms of methods and relationships that involve follow-up and small-group disciple-making in its urban missions.
- d) The positive view of health outreach programs indicates that holistic missions that involve the physical, social, and spiritual domains were still a viable entry point into urban ministry. Nevertheless, according to Myers, initiatives were likely to be marginal and non-transforming, if it was without a structured disciple-making component.²⁷
- e) The understanding of long-term spiritual change among non-church attendees highlights the importance of contextual communication, life-

²⁶ Bongmba, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology*.

²⁷ Myers, *Walking with the Poor*.

oriented teaching, and community presence. The above points have direct bearing on the proposed model of mission strategies.

Individual Interviews Reports

This section provides transcripts of individual interviews conducted on mission strategies, their challenges, and effective ways of engaging urban communities in the Kwadaso District of Kumasi, Ghana. In all, four mission leaders of the SDA Church—the pastor, an elder, the personal ministries leader (PML), and the conference personal ministries director (CPMD)—were interviewed. All participants were given informed consent, but their identities were protected. Responses were organized around three key themes. While minor edits were carried out for clarity, the respondents' voices were authentically preserved.

Section A: Existing Mission Strategies

Interview Question 1: Can you explain the Seventh-day Adventist Church's presence and missionary operations in Kumasi City?

All interviewees confirmed the presence and missionary activities of the SDA Church in Kumasi. The respondents highlight that Kumasi hosts six SDA conferences, and it is an important city to all the conferences in terms of population, mission activities, and financing the church. The Central Ghana Conference oversees eight districts. The church has been in existence for over a century, and its impact is through its Sabbath doctrine aligning with traditional Akan beliefs. The SDA church could boast of institutions like the SDA hospitals and various educational facilities.

The Personal Ministries Leader (PML) noted, "As Personal Ministries Leader, I oversee our mission operations, which include weekly visitation, literature distribution, health seminars, and public campaigns. We have about 15-20 active lay

preachers in the district. " The Conference Personal Ministries director (CPMD) asserts that Kumasi presents unique opportunities and challenges. "We have attempted various approaches like public evangelism, health expos, youth congresses, and community services to register our presence and spread the gospel. The challenge is that the church's strategies have been event-based rather than process-based."

Interview Question 2: How are these mission activities planned and carried out at the local or district level?

On the question above, the general response was that the mission activities followed a top-down approach. The pastor retorts, "The conference schedule serves as the basis for all mission plans. Our conference establishes yearly goals for evangelism work. We work with personal ministries leaders at the district and the local levels to coordinate our activities. The district meetings serve as platforms for planning activities for the local churches."

They underscore the pastor's leadership role in mobilizing members. The elder and the PML note that rapid and hasty planning often leads to a lack of adequate assessment of community needs. The elder states, "We are always under pressure to do something." Training programs for conducting visits and Bible studies are emphasized, alongside the challenges of urban evangelism caused by unpredictable community engagement and security issues. The Conference Personal Ministries Director (CPMD) points out that district plans need to be contextually designed, but pastors and stakeholders struggle with implementation. He says, "We have been advocating for customization of conference programs to local conditions for optimal efficiency."

Interview Question 3: What approaches or methods does the church use to reach different urban populations?

This question was met with mixed responses. The pastor answers, “The local church implements various outreach methods, including public evangelism, music programs, literature distribution, and health seminars. Recently, we aimed at professionals through business fellowships. Sometimes, strategies are influenced by resource donors. For instance, donors may prioritize public campaigns, donations to children’s homes, buying literature for schools, etc.” However, the church elder was of the view that the church’s primary method of outreach is public evangelism, which includes our tent and open-air campaigns. The church conducts outreach through visitation, health programs, and literature evangelism.

To effectively engage diverse demographic groups, the Personal Ministries Leader states, “The church employs various strategies, including social media for youth, home visits for women, and health talks by the health team.” The conference director says, “Successful urban outreach combines multiple methods, such as health initiatives, public campaigns, community service, Bible studies, and personal interaction, yet many districts still rely on unfulfilling traditional strategies.”

Interview Question 4: How involved are church members in these mission activities?

On the question above, the pastor and the elder express similar views that membership participation is challenging in the churches; only 15% of the roughly 800 members actively participate in mission activities. “Many cite busy work schedules and urban life as reasons for their lack of involvement. A small, dedicated team handles most tasks, leading to burnout,” the elder says.

According to the PML, “Active involvement is about 10-15% of membership. The church has approximately 40 to 50 dedicated members who participate in regular visitations. We experience a temporary increase through volunteers during campaigns

while maintaining the same low levels for other mission engagements. The urban environment combined with extended working hours, traffic, and family obligations creates obstacles that prevent people from participating regularly.” The Conference Personal Ministries Director reports that the urban churches show lower member attendance to mission activities than their rural counterparts. “The urban lifestyle demands commuting, work pressure, and economic stress. We need to develop strategies that will work with urban realities.”

Interview Questions 5 & 6: How effective have existing strategies been, and what lessons have been learned?

The pastor did not mince words to admit, “Honestly, effectiveness is limited. The church has not completed its transition to the new urban environment. We record baptisms during campaigns, but retention beyond six months is poor. The strategies are good for a short time but inadequate for long-term discipleship in urban contexts. The church exists in the area, but its impact falls short of expected levels based on the community size.”

The church elder also made this critical observation: “Twenty years ago, public campaigns would draw thousands and result in hundreds of baptisms. Now, we struggle to draw crowds, and baptisms are fewer. The methods haven't changed, but the society has. We are reaping diminishing returns. But I must be honest, our presence in the cities has not grown proportionally with the population increase. The methods we currently use in our mission work in cities still depend on what proved effective in villages. They are older than the cities.”

The PML remarks, “From my records, our baptismal retention rate is about 30-40% after one year. Many who join during campaigns become inactive within months. Follow-up is weak. We don't have adequate systems for nurturing new

converts in the urban context.” CPMD proves the assertions with data: “Data from the conference shows that churches in urban areas experience lower growth rates compared to churches in peri-urban and rural areas. The 2022 evaluation showed the Central Ghana Conference grew from 1.47% in 2012 to 7.43% in 2022, but this is conference-wide, including rural areas. Urban-specific data would likely show slower growth. The current strategies available to cities operate at less than their maximum potential.” The director observes that urban residents hold distinct worldviews, which shape their particular communication methods and social interaction patterns. The gospel message remains unchanged, but we must adjust our methods of delivery.

Section B: Factors Hindering Successful Urban Missionary Work

Interview Questions 1, 2, and 3: What hurdles does the church face, and how do social, cultural, and economic factors and the fast-paced urban lifestyle impact the success of mission work in Kumasi's urban areas?

On the factors militating against effective urban ministry, almost all four participants express the same views. They outline several obstacles, including secularization, time poverty, survival of the fittest syndrome, cultural diversity, and financial costs associated with outreach efforts. Security concerns prevent home visits, as residents are hesitant to allow unknown individuals into their homes. The transient nature of urban populations further complicates follow-ups, while economic pressures lead individuals to prioritize work over religious practices. The District Pastor shares that, “The fast pace means people have limited attention spans. Long evangelistic sermons don't work with them anymore. People want concise, relevant messages. What resonates with one group may alienate another. Our strategy must target and adapt to current trends.”

The elder also notes, “The cost of urban ministry requires higher expenditure. In addition to expenditure on hiring a venue, publicity, and logistics, church membership involvements are also becoming demanding these days. We need to budget for them. The few members who will handle all the work have their responsibilities that must be supported by the church.”

The PML remarks, “Urbanization has disrupted traditional community structures, leading to a lack of meaningful relationships among people living in close proximity. Some time ago it was not too bad, but now it is getting worse. Those days, we preach the Sabbath, and the Akans respond, but you locate the proper Akan people. The youth spend hours online but have no time for church. The cultural trend of individualism has developed.” CPMD also talks from the conference perspective: “The hurdles include inadequate training for urban ministry, insufficient funding for urban-specific programs, and lack of specialized personnel. We train pastors for general ministry, not specifically for urban contexts. We allocate resources based on membership, not mission potential. These systemic issues hinder urban effectiveness.”

Interview Questions 4 and 5: Do internal church factors limit the efficacy of mission efforts, and what support is lacking in the existing mission approach?

On the questions above, the individual respondents responded as follows:

District Pastor: “Absolutely. So many internal factors frustrate mission effort. Leadership fails to accept appropriate strategies when it comes to urban ministry. Our church functions in a way that handles situations in the past. Adaptation to change always brought internal wrangling and unnecessary tensions. The 80/20 rule applies to our church because only 20% of members participate in activities while the rest of the members stay inactive. The training programs fail to meet adequate standards because most members lack proper skills for urban evangelism.”

Church Elder: “The internal factors of the church exist because its leaders lack a clear urban ministry vision. They resist changes to their traditional practices, and the church lacks effective discipleship and follow-up strategies. The churches within the district experience challenges to their unity because they tend to compete with each other instead of working together for their mission.”

Personal Ministries Leader: “Training is a major internal limitation. We train members for village-style visitation, not for engaging sophisticated urban professionals. We don't know how to reach academics, business executives, or artists. Our materials are often culturally irrelevant to urban youth. We lack specialists in urban missions. Our church requires three essential tools for digital outreach. Social media management, content creation, and online follow-up systems.”

Conference Personal Ministries Director: “Conference-level limitations include inadequate urban mission policies, insufficient allocation of resources to urban centers, lack of urban mission research and data, and limited collaboration with other urban-focused organizations. We also have an aging leadership that may not fully understand contemporary urban dynamics.”

Section C: Proposed Mission Strategies

Interview Questions 1 and 2: What new mission techniques will be effective, and how could they be tailored to mission work in Kwadaso communities?

On the questions above, the respondents' views show a lot of similarities; nonetheless, the variations were emphasized.

District Pastor: “Urban residents require small group ministries that can function in homes and workplaces during convenient times. Marketplace ministry is essential for connecting with individuals at their work and business locations.

Intentional community development projects are needed to address urban issues like

sanitation, health, and youth unemployment. The church must also utilize social media, podcasts, YouTube, and WhatsApp groups to engage the youth.”

On the second aspect of the question, the pastor’s view could be summarized as follows: Assessment of community needs through research and inquiries, the program sensitization at multiple times, and actual delivery that impacts the communities more than studying abstract theological concepts.”

Church Elder: “The churches need to implement relational methods such as friendship evangelism, small groups, and interest-based clubs that focuses on health, fitness, and reading. It's essential to equip our members to witness in their professional networks and enhance media operations using radio, TV, and social media. Additionally, establishing strong relationships with community institutions like schools, hospitals, and businesses is vital.”

Personal Ministries Leader: The leader proposed holistic ministry through community service projects, skills training for youth, support to single mothers, digital platform discipleship, etc., that go with Bible studies. He emphasized, “Our two-week micro-evangelism of delivering messages, pack and go, does not build connections and discipleship with potential souls. The souls need interactions, prayers, counseling, and support. We must display practical love before we bid them follow me.”

Conference Personal Ministries Director: The conference’s Personal Ministries Director suggested several innovations: urban training centers, more sanitariums, digital evangelism hubs, marketplace ministry networks, and holistic community transformation projects. He stresses, “We need to pilot new approaches, establish a culture that permits experimentation, evaluate them, and scale what works. We also need to learn strategies of other churches that are successful in urban

ministries. For example, the educational management system of the Roman Catholic, the welfare services of the Pentecostal, etc., that focus on the winning souls for the kingdom.”

Interview Questions 3, 4, 5, and 6: What do church leaders and members require to carry out effective urban missions? Or, how can local churches be strengthened for community mission work? Or, what training do church leaders and members need for successful urban missions?

District Pastor: “First and foremost, we must pray for divine guidance in this respect. Urban ministry now demands spiritual, visionary leaders and dedicated church members knowledgeable about urban dynamics. The church must focus on building relational capacities of members, mirroring Jesus' approach, and emphasize a lifestyle of good neighborliness. Experts in sociology, cross-cultural communication, and community development promote incarnation and contextualization to be influential. Additionally, enhanced training on sharing the gospel, follow-up, and reporting strategies is necessary to win and nurture new converts in urban settings.”

Church Elder: “The church needs spiritual direction and cultural intelligence to handle urban mission challenges. Leaders require strategic thinking to create methods that match the specific needs of urban people. The members require basic training that shows them practical ways to share their faith with people in their social circles. For instance, young people especially live their entire lives on the internet and we need to meet them there. We need to make necessary adjustments to train young people as content creators in short videos, podcasts, and infographics to deliver gospel truth in engaging ways that resonate with our targeted audiences.”

Personal Ministries Leader: “Digital outreach tools require smartphones together with data and content creation skills. The training program for relational

evangelism teaches students how to establish genuine friendships, which lead to spiritual dialogue. The support systems include accountability groups and prayer partners, together with resources designed for follow-up. The organization allows its employees to develop new ideas without worrying about making mistakes.”

Conference Personal Ministries Director: “At the conference level, we need to provide urban mission curriculum for training, innovation funding for pilot projects, research support for understanding urban contexts, partnership facilitation with urban-focused organizations, and policy frameworks that support rather than hinder urban mission innovation.”

Closing Questions

What advice would you provide to church leaders seeking to increase mission activity in Kumasi's urban areas?

District Pastor: “The world needs urban ministry because it has become an essential requirement. Our existence will decrease in importance if we fail to connect with urban areas. The practice of urban ministry needs people to demonstrate their willingness to learn and to change their existing strategies.

Church Elder: “We have a great theological heritage and mission tradition. But tradition should be a platform for innovation, not a prison. The gospel doesn't change, but methods must. Urban ministry challenges us to be salt and light in complex, diverse, rapidly changing environments.”

Personal Ministries Leader: “My concern is that we are losing the next generation. Young people are leaving the church not because they reject faith but because they don't see faith addressing their real questions and concerns. Urban ministry must engage honestly with the doubts, struggles, and aspirations of young urbanites.”

Conference Personal Ministries Director: “The urban mission challenge is the greatest opportunity facing the Adventist Church in the 21st century. We have resources, theology, and global experience. What we need is intentionality prioritizing urban missions in policy, budgeting, training, and prayer. It's time to move from rhetoric to action, from talking about urban mission to doing urban mission.”

Discussion of Findings

This section examines the study's findings from discussions and interviews, synthesizing major themes, existing mission strategies, urban ministry challenges, and the proposed mission strategies, with a focus on their relevance in the context of mission practice in rapidly urbanizing communities. The findings showed that the mission strategies in the Kwadaso District remain public campaigns, health and community services, literature distribution, personal evangelism, and house-to-house witnessing. These methods often generate quick interest but with minimal long-term discipleship in the absence of adequate contextualization and follow-up mechanisms. Unfortunately, churches in Kumasi's urban zones are seeing diminishing results from public campaigns because these strategies are not organised to suit urban testing, and they are also disconnected from urban reality due to a lack of small-group discipleship structures and post-event mentoring mechanisms.

Health outreach, described in the study as one of the most productive access points to the community, aligns with holistic mission activities that integrate health and spiritual care and tend to be highly accepted in urban communities. This study also observed that these initiatives are usually under-resourced and do not have a systematic connection with spiritual growth and retention processes. The participants identified some major barriers to mission work at Kwadaso, including secularization, materialism, weak structures of discipleship, financial constraints, and inadequate

contextualization. Likewise, time pressures, apathy among the youth, and a nonstop exposure to secular media, has decreased responsiveness to traditional mission strategies. The study findings reinforce the calls for SDA Church to rethinking in light of emergent moral and social challenges in contemporary urban life.

The mission strategies from this study, emphasizing contextualized preaching, small group ministries, digital evangelism, integrated social services, and leadership empowerment, finds strong support in contemporary mission literature advocates for a “holistic incarnation model” that blends gospel proclamation with social relevance. The findings of this study, therefore, add to the existing scholarship by proposing a contextual, data-driven strategies that directly responds to the realities of Kwadaso urban communities.

In summary, this discussion confirms that while mission work and ministry remain part of the SDA Church’s traditional DNA, the realities of urban communities require a paradigm shift toward incarnation, contextualized, and relational mission models. The integration of biblical foundations with empirical insights provides a robust framework for sustainable mission practice in Kwadaso and similar urban environments.

Table 8. Key Insights from Individual Interviews

Theme	Key Insights
Existing Strategies	Traditional methods (public campaigns, visitation, literature) dominate but show diminishing returns: low member participation (15%); poor retention rates (30-40%); event-based rather than process-based.
Major Challenges	Secularization, time poverty, diversity, cost, member fatigue, security concerns, transient populations, inadequate training, insufficient funding, and lack of contextualization.
Internal Limitations	Low member involvement (80/20 rule), leadership fatigue, resistance to change, weak follow-up systems, inadequate discipleship, competition between churches, and aging leadership.
Proposed Strategies	Digital evangelism, small groups, marketplace ministry, holistic community development, micro-evangelism, incarnational ministry, community partnerships, and targeted approaches for different demographics.
Training Needs	Urban anthropology, contextual communication, digital ministry skills, relational evangelism, follow-up systems, cross-cultural competence, small group facilitation.
Success Indicators	Contextual relevance, holistic integration, technological currency, relational depth, sustainable resources, transformed lives and communities, and member confidence in witnessing.

Contextual Basis of the Proposed Strategies

Data from interviews and focus group discussions revealed that traditional mission methods such as large public campaigns and literature distribution have limited long-term impact on urban populations due to secular lifestyles, competing priorities, and a lack of contextual relevance. Participants advocated for strategies that combine contextualized preaching, social engagement, digital outreach, and member empowerment to ensure continuous discipleship. This aligns with recent mission literature emphasizing contextual theology, incarnational ministry, and holistic ministry.²⁸ The proposed strategies, therefore, underscore mission as both

²⁸ Devison Telen Banda, Lameck Banda, Matthijs Blok, and Marilyn Naidoo, "Ministerial Formation for Service: Integrative Theological Education at Justo Mwale University, Zambia," *Acta Theologica* 40, no. 2 (2020): 165.

proclamation and transformation, where it was an activity of participation in which the church becomes an agent of social and spiritual change/renewal within the community.

Table 9. Proposed Strategic Interventions for Urban Ministry in Kwadaso

Key Strategy	Rationale
1. Contextualized Evangelism Methods	To ensure the gospel resonates with urban realities such as youth unemployment, education, family life, and social mobility. Contextual theology and local storytelling make the message relevant.
2. Use of Digital Platforms and Media Ministry	Respondents identified digital evangelism (social media, live streams, WhatsApp groups) as essential for reaching younger and working-class populations.
3. Partnership with Local Community Leaders and Institutions	Collaboration with chiefs, assembly members, NGOs, and schools facilitates social legitimacy.
4. Training and Empowerment of Local Members	Respondents emphasized that lay members are underutilized in urban missions. Leadership training enhances ownership and continuity of programs.
5. Holistic Outreach (Social + Spiritual)	Integration of health, education, and livelihood programs reflects Jesus' method of combining physical healing with spiritual teaching
6. Monitoring and Evaluation System for Discipleship	Respondents reported weak follow-up systems. A structured discipleship tracking model ensures accountability and continuity.

Conceptual Description of the Proposed Mission Strategies Framework

Conceptual Diagram of the proposed Mission Strategies represent the interaction between key strategic components within an integrated, cyclical mission model. At the core of the framework lies the incarnational mission principle, which is the church's identification with the urban community through service, empathy, and presence. Surrounding this core are six interconnected pillars. Arrows between the components indicate a feedback system, showing that information and outcomes from one pillar influence the adaptation and improvement of others, creating a dynamic,

learning-centered model which reflects the biblical Great Commission of Matt 28:19-20.

Conceptual Description of the Proposed Mission Strategy Framework

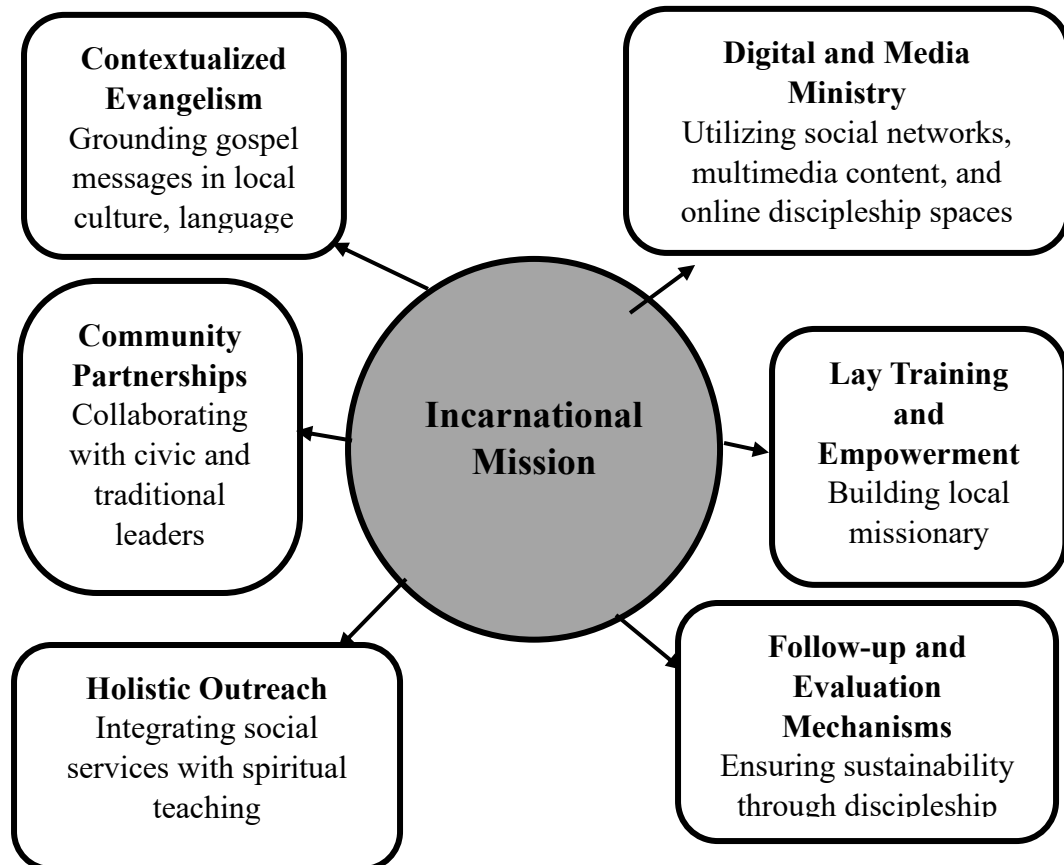


Figure 8. Conceptual Diagram of the Proposed Mission Strategy Framework

Theological and Mission Alignment

The proposed framework aligns closely with Ellen G. White's principles of city ministry, emphasizing that "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people."²⁹ This advocate mingling with people, showing sympathy, ministering to their needs, and winning their confidence before inviting them to follow Christ.

From a biblical perspective, the framework embodies several core theological themes:

- Incarnation Ministry (John 1:14): The church must dwell among the people, understanding their struggles and hopes.
- Holistic Mission (Luke 4:18–19): Jesus' mission statement integrated physical healing, social justice, and spiritual liberation.
- Community Partnership (Acts 2:42–47): The early church thrived through shared resources, fellowship, and public goodwill.
- Empowerment and Discipleship (2 Timothy 2:2): Paul's leadership model emphasized training reliable men and women to teach others.

This alignment reinforces the understanding that effective urban mission requires both strategic innovation and spiritual authenticity. The integration of empirical findings with theological imperatives ensures that the framework remains both contextually grounded and doctrinally faithful.

²⁹ White, Ellen G. *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 143.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study titled “Exploring Effective Mission Strategies for Reaching Out to the Urban Communities in Kwadaso District, Kumasi, Ghana.” The chapter synthesizes the entire research process by revisiting the purpose, objectives, methodology, and key findings. It further draws well-grounded conclusions based on empirical data and theological reflection, and proposes practical, policy-oriented, and scholarly recommendations relevant to the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in Ghana and similar urban contexts. The chapter also outlines the implications of the study for mission theory, church practice, and theological education; acknowledges the limitations of the research; and proposes areas for further study.

Summary of the Study

Rapid urbanization in Ghana, particularly in cities like Kumasi, has significantly transformed social structures, cultural values, economic priorities, and religious engagement. The Kwadaso District, located within the Kumasi metropolis, exemplifies these changes through increasing population density, religious pluralism, secular influences, and competing urban lifestyles. These dynamics pose considerable challenges to traditional mission approaches of public evangelistic campaigns, personal visitation, literature evangelism, and others employed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The primary purpose of this study was to explore a contextualized, holistic, and sustainable mission strategies that would empower the SDA Church in the Kwadaso District to engage urban communities more effectively. The study sought to bridge the gap between traditional mission practices and the lived realities of urban dwellers by integrating empirical insights with biblical and mission principles.

The study revealed that the SDA Church in Kwadaso employs several mission strategies, including public evangelistic campaigns, health and community outreach programs, personal and house-to-house evangelism, and limited digital engagement. While these approaches have contributed to community awareness and short-term participation, they have generally failed to produce sustained discipleship and long-term retention.

Major challenges identified include increasing secularization, competing urban lifestyles, lack of contextualization of the gospel message, weak follow-up and discipleship systems, under-utilization of digital platforms, leadership fatigue, and low member participation. These challenges significantly undermine the effectiveness of urban mission efforts. In response, the study proposed an integrated mission strategy framework emphasizing contextualized evangelism, digital and media ministry, holistic outreach, community partnerships, lay empowerment, and structured monitoring and evaluation systems.

Conclusions of the Study

The study concludes that while the mission remains a crucial subject to the SDA Church in Kwadaso, the traditional mission strategies are insufficient for addressing the complexities of urban life. Public evangelistic campaigns, health outreach programs, literature distributions, and limited digital ministries are event-based strategies that are effective in creating visibility and goodwill but lack the

relational depth necessary for long-term discipleship. Follow-up structures are not in place to foster long-term collaborations between the church and the communities.

The strategies in use were, therefore, inadequate for sustained spiritual transformation in urban contexts.

Furthermore, socio-cultural and organizational variables greatly reduced the effectiveness of the Kwadaso district's mission strategies. Secularization and competing priorities reduce receptivity to traditional church programs, while non-contextualized preaching diminishes relevance. Weak discipleship systems and limited digital engagement further worsen the gap between initial contact and long-term commitment. These findings confirm that urban mission challenges are systemic rather than incidental and require intentional strategic reform.

The proposed mission strategic framework offers a viable and contextually appropriate response to the identified challenges. The study concludes that an effective urban mission must be incarnational, holistic, participatory, and process-oriented. Contextualized preaching, digital evangelism, community-based outreach, and lay empowerment are not optional innovations but essential components of sustainable urban mission.

From a theological perspective, the study reaffirms that Christ's incarnation model of ministry remains normative for urban mission. Ellen G. White's emphasis on mingling, compassion, service, and confidence-building before proclamation aligns strongly with the empirical findings of the study. Theologically, the integration of proclamation and social concern reflects the mission of Jesus (Luke 4:18–19) and the practices of the early church (Acts 2:42–47). Effective urban mission, therefore, requires faithfulness to doctrine alongside contextual adaptability.

Recommendations of the Study

Recommendations for the SDA Church in Kwadaso District

It is recommended that the SDA Church in Kwadaso adopt the proposed contextualized mission strategic framework as a guiding model for urban outreach. The church should intentionally shift from isolated evangelistic events to continuous discipleship processes rooted in relationships, small groups, and community engagement.

Recommendations for Church Leadership and Administration

District and conference leadership should establish dedicated urban mission units to coordinate planning, training, funding, and evaluation of mission initiatives. The study affirms the relevance of contextual and holistic mission models. It provides empirical support for integrating theology and social engagement in urban mission practice.

Church administrators should prioritize urban mission, data-driven evaluation, and digital engagement. Institutional commitment is essential for sustaining mission effectiveness. Furthermore, intentional leadership development programs should be instituted in training urban ministries leaders to reduce burnout and enhance shared responsibilities of the urban mission among clergy and laity.

Recommendations for Digital and Media Ministry

The church should invest in structured ministry by developing active online platforms for outreach, teaching, and discipleship. Youth and media-skilled members should be trained and empowered to lead digital mission initiatives, recognizing the digital space as a primary mission field in urban settings.

Recommendations for Community Engagement

Strategic partnerships with local leaders, institutions, and civil organizations should be strengthened to enhance trust and community impact. Holistic outreach programs addressing health, education, and livelihoods should be intentionally linked to discipleship pathways.

Recommendations for Theological Education

The findings call for policy reforms within the SDA Church. Ministerial training institutions should incorporate urban mission studies, contextual theology, and digital ministry into their curricula to prepare pastors and church leaders for contemporary urban challenges.

Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies may employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches to assess the long-term impact of contextualized mission strategies. Comparative studies across multiple urban districts and longitudinal research on digital evangelism effectiveness are also recommended.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA, NAIROBI, KENYA

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

You are being invited to participate in a research project titled "Exploring Mission Strategies for Reaching Out to the Urban Communities in Kwadaso District, Kumasi, Ghana." The research for a Master of Divinity Ministry (MDiv) degree at the Adventist University of Africa in Kenya.

The following information explains what is involved in the research, what you will be asked to do, and the possible benefits and risks of participation in this study. You are encouraged to ask questions and get clarity on the nature of the study. Please keep in mind that your decision to engage in this research is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any moment during the study.

The purpose of this study: The purpose of this study is to investigate the Seventh-day Adventist Church's existing mission strategies in Kumasi City, identify the barriers to effective urban ministry, and gather insights to help implement a more contextually relevant mission strategy for the Kwadaso urban district.

Your participation: You will be invited to take part in an interview. This means that you will be asked to share your thoughts, opinions, or experiences on the Seventh-day Adventist Church's existing mission strategies in Kumasi City, identify the barriers to effective urban ministry, and propose insights to help implement more contextually relevant mission strategies. The interview duration is one and a half hours. You will also be asked to join a focus group discussion. This indicates that the study will consist of an interview and a group discussion. The focus group will consist of three people. You will be asked about your thoughts, perceptions, or experiences related to the subject. Each session will last approximately one hour.

Benefits and Risks: By participating, you will contribute to the understanding of an effective mission plan, which may help improve the community. Participation involves no known risks.

Confidentiality: Your personal information will remain confidential. Your interview replies will be anonymised and will not be identified in any study reports or publications.

Please carefully read and sign this form if you would like to participate in the study

1. My involvement in this research endeavor is entirely voluntary. There is no coercion to participate.
2. I may withdraw and cease my participation at any time without consequence.

3. If I feel uncomfortable during the interview, I can refuse to answer questions or end the session.
4. I agree that the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis.
5. I accept that the researcher will not use my name in any reports based on this interview or discussion.

Referrals:

- If you have ethical concerns about participating in this research, please contact the Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee at Adventist University of Africa (ethics@aua.ac.ke).

- Contact the supervisor of the research if you need more information or have questions:

Professor Sampson Nwaomah. Email: nwoamahs@aua.ac.ke

I have read and fully understood the statements on this form. All of my questions were answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you

ADU, Kwadwo

Master of Divinity with Emphasis on Urban Ministry.

Email: kwadwoa@aua.ac.ke. Mobile: +233240211489

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Interview Questions Designed for Selected Seventh-day Adventist Church Individual Members (the pastor, the elder, the personal ministries leader, and the conference personal ministries director)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Pr. Adu Kwadwo, a Master of Divinity student at the Adventist University of Africa, is conducting a research project on mission strategies for urban communities in the Kwadaso district, Kumasi. This study aims to gather thoughts and opinions on the Seventh-day Adventist Church's existing mission strategies, identify challenges, and explore more effective approaches. All information collected will be treated confidentially and used exclusively for academic purposes. You are free to answer as you choose or withdraw at any time.

- Name (optional)
- Age bracket of the respondent
- Role in the church
- Duration of the respondent in the church

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Section A: Existing Mission Strategies

1. Can you explain the Seventh-day Adventist Church's presence and missionary operations in Kumasi City?
2. How are these mission activities planned and carried out at the local or district level?
3. How are mission activities organised and implemented at the local or district level?
4. What approaches or methods does the church use to reach different urban populations (e.g., youth, professionals, market women, students)?
5. How involved are church members in these mission activities?
6. How effective have existing strategies been in winning and nurturing souls in urban communities?
7. What lessons has the church learned from previous mission efforts in the city?

Section B: Factors Hindering Successful Urban Missionary Work in Kumasi City

1. What hurdles do you believe the church faces while carrying out mission work in Kumasi's urban areas?
2. How do social, cultural, and economic aspects in the city impact the success of evangelistic efforts?

3. Do internal church variables, such as leadership, member participation, financial resources, and training, restrict the efficacy of mission efforts?
4. How does the fast-paced lifestyle and diversity of urban people affect evangelism?
5. What are the key difficulties that inhibit individuals in urban neighbourhoods from responding to the gospel?
6. What support (spiritual, financial, or institutional) do you believe is lacking in the existing mission system?

Section C: Exploring new mission initiatives for the Kwadaso Urban District of Kumasi.

1. What new mission techniques can effectively reach Kumasi's urban populace, particularly in Kwadaso?
2. How can the church tailor its programming to the unique needs and lifestyles of city dwellers?
3. What do you believe church leaders and members require to carry out effective urban missions?
4. How can local churches strengthen community relationships through mission work?
5. What training or capacity-building do you believe church leaders and members require for successful urban missions?
6. In your opinion, what should be the primary focal areas or priorities in designing a contextualised mission plan for the Kwadaso urban district?
7. How might current tools like media, technology, and social platforms help improve urban outreach?

Closing Questions

1. What advice would you provide to church leaders looking to increase mission activity in Kumasi's urban areas?

Interview Questions Designed for Church Focus Group

Dear Sir/Madam,

am Pr. Adu Kwadwo, a Master of Divinity candidate at the Adventist University of Africa, is researching urban mission techniques in the Kwadaso district, Kumasi. This study seeks the thoughts and opinions of this church's focus group on the Seventh-day Adventist Church's existing mission strategies, identifies problems, and proposes more effective approaches. All information gathered will be kept confidential and used solely for academic reasons. You are allowed to respond or withdraw at any moment.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SECTION 1: Exploring Existing Mission Strategies

1. What existing outreach or mission initiatives has the S.D.A. church in Kwadaso undertaken?
2. How do S.D.A. churches in Kwadaso connect with various community groups, such as youth, families, and professionals?
3. Which mission strategies did you use to connect, and why?
4. Are there any mission strategies you could have implemented to achieve better results?
5. How is media (TV, radio, social media) being used in your church's mission work?

SECTION 2: Identifying Challenges

1. What challenges do churches have in effectively engaging urban communities in Kumasi?
2. Are there cultural, economic, or social factors that discourage people from engaging with the church?
3. What are some barriers within the church itself (e.g., leadership, member involvement, resources)?
4. Do you think the urban environment is more spiritually resistant than rural areas? Why or why not?
5. What kinds of feedback or resistance do you encounter from urban residents?

SECTION 3: Brainstorming New Strategies for Kwadaso Urban District

1. What specific needs do people in Kwadaso urban communities have that the church could address?
2. What mission programs or outreach activities would attract people in this area?
3. How can the church better reach out to youth, young professionals, or migrants in urban Kwadaso?
4. What role could small groups, house churches, or community centers play in urban ministry?
5. How can the church partner with local authorities or NGOs to make urban missions more effective?
6. If you were given the responsibility to lead an urban mission in Kwadaso, what would be your first three steps?

SECTION 4: Concluding Questions

1. From everything mentioned today, what do you think is the most critical thing the church must do differently to improve its urban mission?
2. Do you have any final suggestions or comments?

Closing Instructions

- Thank participants for their contributions.
- Remind them of how their input will be used in the research.
- Collect any written notes or contributions if applicable.

Interview Questions Designed for Community Focus Group

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Pr. Adu Kwadwo, a Master of Divinity candidate at the Adventist University of Africa, is researching urban mission techniques in the Kwadaso district, Kumasi. This study seeks the thoughts and opinions of this community focus group on the Seventh-day Adventist Church's existing mission strategies, identifies problems, and explores more effective approaches. All information gathered will be kept confidential and used solely for academic reasons. You are allowed to respond or withdraw at any moment.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SECTION 1: Understanding the Church's Existing Strategies

1. What church activities/programs do you see in your community?

2. How does the SDA Church engage with local communities? For instance, through evangelism, health programs, youth activities, and community service?
3. Have you or anybody you know ever participated in these church programs? How was the experience?
4. Which church activities attract people and create a beneficial impact in the community?
5. How do you believe the S.D.A. Church engages with various groups in these communities, such as youth, traders, workers, and students?
6. What motivates people to join or listen to the church's message?
7. How do you think the church should improve its present outreach activities?

SECTION 2: Identifying Problems or Barriers.

1. What hinders community members' participation in the S.D.A. church program and outreach activities?
2. Do you believe community residents' busy schedules or priorities hinder participation in church programs?
3. How does the community see church programs in general?
4. Do cultural or social factors hinder the church's outreach efforts?
5. What problems do you think church workers or members encounter when reaching out to people here?
6. What adjustments could the church make to serve the needs of this community better?
7. How do modern lifestyles, technology, and social media influence people's responses to church activities?

SECTION 3: Finding New Strategies

1. What initiatives or activities do you believe will assist the church in reaching more individuals in the community?
2. How can the church make its message more relevant to urban residents?
3. What community needs could the church address, such as job training, health initiatives, youth mentoring, or family support?
4. How can youth become more involved in church outreach activities?
5. Do you think social media, music, or drama can effectively reach people?
6. How can the church partner with schools, community leaders, or other groups to strengthen mission work?
7. Could you suggest a new mission plan for this area?

Closing Questions:

8. Are there any further mission issues you'd like to discuss?
9. What recommendations would you provide to church leaders planning an outreach activity in the community?

APPENDIX C

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

Note to Researcher: Invited participants should read/sign an Informed Consent Form BEFORE being given this Form for completion.

Non-Disclosure Statement:

You are asked to read and sign this form because you are being invited to be a participant in a focus group discussion. As a participant, you will be asked to speak your views and listen to others' views. You are asked not to disclose anything said within the context of the discussion. By agreeing to participate, you agree not to disclose to others outside the event anything said within the context of this discussion.

_____ I agree to maintain the confidentiality of the information discussed by all participants and the researcher during the focus group session.

_____ I do not agree to the confidentiality requirements of this study and decline to participate.

Name _____ **Date** _____

Signature _____

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VITA

VITABACKGROUND / PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: ADU, Kwadwo
Email: kwadwoa@aua.ac.ke
Date of Birth: 25th February, 1969
Citizenship: Ghanaian
Marital Status: Married

EDUCATION

Institution	Period	Qualification
Adventist University of Africa	2021- 2026	Master of Divinity
Babcock University, Nigeria	2006- 2008	Post-Graduate Dip. in Theology
University of Education	1998- 2001	Bed. In Tech. Educ
Mampong Tech. Teachers' College	1992- 1995	'3' Year Post Sec (Cert 'A')
Amaniampong Sec. School	1987- 1991	Ordinary Level Certificate

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Organization Position Year

Central Ghana Conf. of SDA	District Pastor	2008-
Mpasatia Senior High School	Teacher	2002-2006
Wilson Adventist JSS	Teacher	2002
Mampong SDA JSS	Teacher	1998-2000
Abofour L/A JSS	Teacher	1995-1998

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

ORGANIZATION	YEAR	EXPERIENCE
Ghana National Association of Adventist Students (GNASS)	1992	Secretary
Ghana National Association of President Adventist Students (GNASS)	1995-2006	Classroom Teacher
Central Ghana Conference of SDA	2008- 2021	Teacher
Central Ghana Conference of SDA	2008- 2021	District Pastor
Central Ghana Conference of SDA	2023- 2026	Church Pastor
Central Ghana Conference of SDA	2018- 2026	Departmental Director
Central Ghana Conference of SDA	2018- 2026	Executive Committee Member