

NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE TALE OF TWO CITIES: NEIGHBOURING CITIES SEPARATED BY ECONOMIC
BOUNDARIES BUT JOINED BY SPIRITUAL POVERTY TOWARDS KINGDOM MISSION
TRANSFORMATION OF THE STREETS

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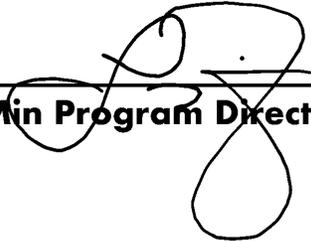
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ABSTRACT

This research presents a study of Street Pastors in the United Kingdom (UK). Street Pastors are Christian volunteers who look after vulnerable people in the night-time economy, providing them security through empathy and care.

The motives of Street Pastors for engaging with such vulnerable citizens as partygoers are multi-layered, but their personal faith appears to be a fundamental driver of their volunteer work. A certain kind of orthodox certitude provides them the strength to go out on the street, face the unknown, and give compassionate care to their fellow citizens. Comparing the work of the efficacy of Street Pastors and the larger role of today's church through unity of congregations, ministries, and clergy in the larger context of poverty eradication, which is one of God's ultimate goals for human beings. This research is based on the model of NewSong Community Church, Chelmsford, Massachusetts.

This area comprises a vast socioeconomic ecosystem, with forty percent of its members living in Lowell, Massachusetts and having high poverty levels, and the remaining sixty percent living around the Chelmsford area and constituting an affluent socioeconomic class. These two cities are geographically close but socially, economically, and ethnically miles apart. This research offers a proactive methodology to determine how this congregation might serve as a model of helping the spiritually impoverished, regardless of the marginalization of poverty and the spatialization of wealth.

Aptly titled "The Tale of Two Cities," this research gives community viewpoints about what inequality is, and how it is perceived, contended with, and resisted, in the following sections. These points of view help to comprehend inequality in a more sophisticated way than the accounts commonly presented in media and political narratives. Indeed, the personal histories of disparity

foreground the limits of various sorts of authority and decision-making. Specifically, this project seeks to answer the following question: in the same way the Jews and Gentiles unite in terms of commonality, can the spiritually impoverished and socially impecunious share the same church?

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

NewSong Community Church in Chelmsford, Massachusetts, is a church that serves the community and encourages people to embark on a life-changing Christian adventure. It invites everyone to serve God by striving for peace and justice, to respect and benefit from all great religious traditions, and to be known for their love towards each other. In the Chelmsford region, this church embraces Christians and others seeking to learn about Christianity. Specifically, it focuses on studying and comprehending the Bible and following in the footsteps of Jesus and his disciples.

The city of Lowell, a part of Chelmsford, started to disastrously decline as its business community erroneously failed to adapt to the changing times. By the 1890s, most of its textile industry had migrated to the southern states. Its remaining manufacturing base, comprising shoe and thread textiles, left the city by the 1980s. The failure of the business community to successfully innovate had devastating results. The effects, in part, are still evident today, with Lowell currently sheltering an expanding homeless community. Many churches have endeavored to help with these issues but have achieved minimal impact. In this context, Bob Roberts Jr. asks a critical question: “Where is the Church today speaking to justice and mercy? Perhaps this is a leadership issue? James Lawrence states the exact shape of the Church is changing. We are in a new context and are exploring new approaches. It is a critical moment of opportunity. Any adequate response will

involve renewed imagination, clear vision, and the mobilization of the people of God. But under God, all of these are dependent on one supreme factor: the quality of leadership.”¹

Adjacent to and four miles from Lowell lies Westford, an affluent town of approximately 24,000 residents, predominantly white-collar workers, and an average household income of \$145,000 (compared to the average household income of \$72,670 in Lowell). Westford’s residents live in large homes averaging over \$700,000 in value, while the houses in Lowell have an average value of \$279,200.² This small market town was once noteworthy for its apple farming and its residents traveling four miles to work in the Lowell mills. Due to its innovation and willingness to change and adapt, Westford now ranks as one of the most affluent towns in Massachusetts. Clearly, there is an economic disparity between the residents of the two abovementioned places, an issue which is highly relevant to this research.

The U.K. is renowned for its wealthy and at times hostile nightlife; its cities and villages, large and small, turn into unsafe/unfriendly areas filled with inebriated individuals every weekend. Adolescents are openly enticed into hedonistic recreational activities, including extensive alcohol intake, which lead to disorderly behavior and outbursts of violence.³ The much-lamented criminality and disorder problems associated with a typical night out are results of the same commercial system, and the Chelmsford area is not exempt from such a system or its attendant troubles.

Against this backdrop, there is considerable scholarly interest in how bouncers manage illegal and disruptive behavior by using contextual measures or otherwise prohibiting it by utilizing

¹ Bob Roberts, *Transformation: How Global Churches Transform Lives and the World*, ePub Edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2009).

² “Lowell city, Massachusetts; United States” Quick Facts, United States Census Bureau, accessed July 9, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/lowellcitymassachusetts>.

³ Aaron Earls, “Most” Teenagers Drop Out of Church When They Become Young Adults, Lifeway Research, Lifeway, modified January 15, 2019, <https://lifewayresearch.com/2019/01/15/most-teenagers-drop-out-of-church-as-young-adults/>.

banning orders. In fact, observers of the nighttime economy have devoted most of their efforts towards the recommendation of security policy to professional government and commercial partners.

Still, the contributions of what is referred to as policing below the level of government have traditionally been neglected in criminological literature on the administration and supervision of UK's nightlife zones. In this light, it is imperative to spark conversations on Street Pastors, who set an example of communitarian behavior by assisting anybody in distress during a night out. To elaborate on the above definition, Street Pastors constitute an interdenominational Christian program that aims to reduce crime, rehabilitate individuals on the fringes of society, and develop more robust and balanced communities, particularly in so-called "difficult" locations sheltering economically depressed populations.

A Street Pastor is a missionary who cares for, listens to, and helps others, especially in the nighttime economy, working in crowded places where individuals drink, party, and go club- or pub-hopping. In Chelmsford, co-existing in such a spatial economy is the homeless community, which adds a new dynamic and concomitant challenge for Street Pastors working here.

Problem Statement

This tale of two cities demonstrates that one's economic poverty is not synonymous with the poverty of his/her soul; in this context poverty is used as a polysemic word, referring to economic as well as spiritual poverty. Similarly, one's affluence is not a marker of his/her spiritual wealth. I will unpack these issues by focusing on those who reside at the margins of social spaces: the outsiders, the spatialized wealthy, the alienated, and the disenfranchised. Using relevant data for

Lowell and Chelmsford/Westford, the above categories may be viewed as templates for those living on the margins of social spaces, both in poverty and affluence.

More importantly, this research intends to locate the church in relation to the local spiritual ecosystem shared by Lowell and Chelmsford/Westford. It delves into three distinct issues: the lack of relevant partnership among local churches, an unplanned ministry for the homeless, and indifference between the rich and the poor in the larger community. As a crucial observation regarding the churches' efforts, it notes that there is something tragically amiss. Hence, this paper seeks to understand whether the church community in these areas has become complacent in its philosophy and has succumbed to rigid thinking, thereby limiting its effectiveness in distinction and relation between material and spiritual wealth in the context of poverty.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this research is to determine the levels of mentoring and practice that various church leaders display with respect to the eradication of poverty, based on the model used by NewSong Community Church⁴ to engage with its vastly diverse socioeconomic ecosystem: forty percent of this ecosystem's inhabitants live in Lowell and have a high poverty level, while the remaining sixty percent live in and around Chelmsford and are affluent. Moreover, I shall refer to two local towns in New England as templates for this research.

Specifically, this study investigates pastors' and church leaders' expertise and training in eradicating poverty to identify the best practices of NewSong Community Church in Massachusetts⁵. The concept of poverty eradication has received little attention inside this church,

⁴ "Welcome," New Song community Church, accessed April 6, 2023, <https://www.newsongs.org>.

⁵ Zacharu Ritvsky, "5 Ways the Church Can Help the Poor," *Acton Institute*, last modified March 15, 2017, accessed August 17, 2022, <https://www.acton.org/pub/commentary/2017/03/15/5-ways-church-can-help-poor>.

and its philanthropic endeavor is incongruent with regard to its abilities. Therefore, this study delineates the avenues to improve the church's poverty eradication efforts and addresses problems that church leaders participating in this endeavor may face. The research component, a quantitative methodological component (explained in chapter 4) used for the survey of the NewSong Community Church congregation, investigates the historical evolution of this church at two points in this study, discussing the church's identity since its inception to its anticipated development through this research, in the hopes of offering clarity and comprehension of the history/sociality of NewSong Community Church.

Experiences

This research was primarily motivated by my deep involvement in the NewSong Community Church. I am the Pastor and member of this church, which is composed of a small, highly relational group of generous people. A peculiar fact I noticed was that this group was willing to provide financial succor to the poor and yet hesitant to connect with either the indigent or the affluent of Lowell and Chelmsford, respectively. Perturbed by this, I was compelled to ask why we could not connect more meaningfully with these two communities. In this respect, I also identified a challenging problem for my church: invisibly intertwined with the fabric of our communities, hidden in plain sight, and rarely contemplated upon, are the spatialized affluent of the Chelmsford area.

Having witnessed the poor quality of my church's interaction with a soup kitchen in Lowell, I was troubled that we had offered inadequate spiritual investment to our guests. We had served them food but had not spent time with them, either socially or spiritually, and I speculated that other churches in our community would probably be doing the same. When I asked three local pastors in

our community if they tried to connect with the homeless, their replies were similar in that they would like to, but no one wants to engage with the homeless community proactively. Such responses bolstered my desire to explore my research topic.

Investigation

During the nine years of my stay in the Chelmsford area, I have come across many people here whom I found to be living on or below the poverty threshold/ line; according to the available literature, this is a recurrent issue. On this on issue in 2008 Lowell government conducted a thorough study called Partnership for Change: Action Plan to End Homelessness. This led to a 10-year plan to reduce homelessness in Lowell by overcoming the crisis and its effects on the economically disadvantaged. In 2019, a new city-wide plan to address the same issue included calls for significant changes to the Lowell Transitional Living Center operations.⁶ A recent aspect of this issue, dealt with in the Patch reports, concerns the question of whether Westford restaurants should be allowed to install drive-thru windows, as it would “lower the tone of the area.”⁷ This demonstrates the disparity between the two communities.

Generalizability and Importance

Relevant to churches’ efforts towards spiritual and economic well-being, this study investigates church leaders’ learning and teaching levels in relation to poverty eradication and determines the best concomitant practices of NewSong Community Church. There is an urgent need to eradicate poverty in the area under study, and I expect that the my findings will be helpful in this

⁶ Elizabeth Dobbins, “Lowell Releases Plan to Address Homelessness,” *The Lowell Sun*, modified August 17, 2019, <https://www.lowellsun.com/2019/08/17/lowell-releases-plan-to-address-homelessness/>.

⁷ Jenna Fisher, “Westford” Wrestles With Having Drive Thru Restaurants,” *Patch PM*, *Patch*, last modified May 26, 2021, <https://patch.com/massachusetts/westford/westford-wrestles-having-drive-thru-restaurants-patch-pm>

regard. If they are implemented by the area chairman, the pastors, and other leaders in the region, they will aid the entire community living here. In fact, this research comprises important decision-makers and agents of change, such as Lowell's former Mayor, City Manager, Director of Homelessness Initiatives, the Police Department, and the Sheriff's Department. Adopting my recommendations, these agents can consequently launch initiatives to combat poverty both inside the city of Lowell and over a wider geographical location.

This study yields some tangible findings that will be valuable to any church pastor, leader, or layperson interested in establishing a robust poverty eradication program. Although the original research focuses on NewSong Community Church, Chelmsford, Massachusetts, it may be applied to other regions. This research can also be a helpful resource with which other congregations or Bible Colleges can supplement their curricula; its discoveries have the potential to significantly influence both students and educators in the larger domain of ministry.

Social action and development projects may provide short-term assistance to those in need, but they rarely address the underlying roots of the problem of poverty. On the other hand, advocacy may address the core causes of such an issue by making changes in the policies and practices of people in power and tilting the balance of power, in a specific circumstance, towards the disadvantaged. Indeed, God entrusts man to care for his creation, asking for accountability regarding man's use of the talents, time, money, and other opportunities that He provides us. In this light, C. René Padilla speaks of God's redemptive purpose behind His creation and the historical vocation that the church has regarding that purpose, Padilla continues the mission of the church and, therefore, can be understood only in the light of the Kingdom of God.⁸ Keeping Padilla's assertions in mind, this research claims that advocacy work can successfully mobilize additional

⁸ C. Rene Padilla, *Mission between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Publishing, 2013).

resources to assist in the achievement of God's purpose. One effective advocacy method can urge people in authority to utilize their resources in addressing the issue of poverty, while another approach may encourage the modification of related policy or practice.

Further, advocacy work has the potential to improve the setting in which one performs a task. Thus, with advocacy the church may find it easier to accomplish its responsibility of providing succor to the needy. For example, if advocacy work urges the government to recognize free speech and religious freedom, the church will have more liberty to preach. If officials can persuade their government to allocate more funds to health, the church will be able to engage more effectively with communities for preventative healthcare. If the government provides land rights to deprived communities, the church may more easily collaborate with them regarding their development. In other words, advocacy can spread the proclaimed Good News, hoping that others will receive it. In this vein, its goal is similar to the purpose of all church missions: to convey the Good News to all, especially the poor.

Thus, if a church ignores these advocacy duties, it is betraying its own calling. However, if it focuses on advocacy tasks, it strives to fulfill its purpose. Advocacy is, therefore, a critical component of a church's mission. However, it is simply one component that needs to be interwoven with the rest of its mission-driven objectives. Hence, it must work in tandem with the government, which is another essential entity that possesses and wields authority regarding the issue of poverty.

The Bible states unequivocally that the concept of government is beneficial for people's well-being: it is a necessary part of God's design. God made heaven and earth and designated humans as stewards to populate and act upon the world and govern all living beings.

However, sin has now touched all His creation, including humans and their methods of government. While governments continue to serve a purpose, they are restricted in their abilities and prone to corruption/deceit/authoritarianism. Fortunately, these universal concerns are being addressed and more people are being inspired to make a difference in terms of reforming their governments.

For instance, Les Isaac O.B.E.⁹ was inspired by a speech presented at the “Faith in the Community Conference” recorded by Christians in Parliament and Evangelical Alliance. The Archbishop of York, the Right Reverend and Right Honorable John Sentamu, gave this speech, where he said, “Building strong working relationships between local authorities and religious communities should not be based on mere ‘tolerance.’ It should involve talking, listening, and growing together. Together, working in the unity of spirit, we are more potent than when we try to do things in isolation.”¹⁰

Moreover, David Burrows, Member of the British Parliament for Enfield Southgate, stated that “it was not going to be a quick fix, no easy task, with suspicious minds lurking in the background, there will still be those who wish to sideline the work done by faith-based groups, but they remain wrong, and that is becoming increasingly accepted.”¹¹

Clearly, regarding poverty alleviation, the church as an institution has a limited number of possibilities. On one hand, it can become so inextricably linked to the state that it loses its ability to

⁹ Order of the British Empire is a British order of chivalry, rewarding contributions to the arts, sciences, and work with charitable welfare organizations.

¹⁰ Evangelical Alliance, *Faith in the Community: Strengthening Ties between Faith Groups and Local Authorities* (London: Christians in Parliament, 2013), www.eauk.org.

¹¹ Les Isaac and Rosalind Davies, *Faith on the Streets: Christians in Action through the Street Pastors Movement*, accessed October 24, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/faithonstreetsch0000isaa>. (London, Hodder & Stoughton 2014)

be objective and hold the state accountable. Another option is to withdraw from the political system entirely, but even then, the church would be unable to fulfill its role of holding those in power responsible for their actions; in most countries, it is practically impossible to opt out of the state because we live in democracies and pay taxes, which means we are already part of a governmental system.

Additionally, there are considerable problems with church-based functions. Many locals have witnessed churches and ministries providing food to the deprived but making only a minimal spiritual investment in their lives. It appears that while the poor attend church or engage with ministries, churches rarely reach out to the homeless and the lost. John Perkins reinforces this argument: “Each Sunday morning, commuters can be seen filling their church’s parking lots. Reaching the poor is not a high priority for those commuting to be at church for an hour or two.”¹² Furthermore, in the Chelmsford area, the ministries are scattered throughout the city, making it difficult for the homeless community to reach a ministry and receive adequate help/provisions as per their needs.

Research Questions

The abovementioned observations unsettled me and evoked a desire to investigate the reasons why churches do not connect with their neighboring communities regarding poverty eradication.

Thus, I framed the following research questions:

- a. Is this the lack of connection a generic issue or a unique one?

¹² John M. Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together & Doing It Right* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1995).

- b. How do we, as church members, interact with our communities?
- c. What measures are being taken by our church to connect with the deprived/impoverished demographic proactively?
- d. How can church ministries collectively provide a platform where these grievances can be addressed?

Limitations

One of this study's objectives is to examine how local churches can unite despite theological differences. Hence, I network amongst the clergy and the ministries to ascertain if duplication of work is a regular occurrence. This entails a possible limitation, as historically, connecting with the clergy in the Chelmsford area has been an unproductive endeavor. Therefore, I aim to investigate further and connect with more ministries such as Young Life and Intervarsity, St Paul's Soup Kitchen, Life Connections, Out of Darkness Ministries, and Dream Center (Lawrence County) to gauge their willingness to reach out to both the homeless and the affluent. As the ecclesia, I strive to reach and embrace every group, regardless of nationality (legal or otherwise), skin color, sexual orientation, or age, loving and caring for everyone just like Jesus Christ.

Overview of the Project

This research aims to assess church leaders' knowledge and comprehension of poverty eradication efforts. It also intends to identify the best practices for assisting the poor in the areas serviced by NewSong Community Church within Massachusetts. In conclusion, the first chapter of this research describes the nature of its initiative and its main issue: NewSong Community Church's

lack of involvement in poverty alleviation or engagement with the marginalized, along with the features of its engagement with the wealthy or the spatialized affluent.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Indeed, ecclesiae can partner up with each other in their efforts to eradicate poverty, both economic and spiritual, diffusing the fragrance of God as they recapture the hearts and minds of people in their cities. In this light, Les Isaacs, the founder of Street Pastors, comments on its social efficacy: “It is only showing a bit of love on the streets. This love significantly affects the Christian community who desire to reclaim our streets, endeavoring to reach out to wounded communities rather than just conducting a service or applying Band-Aid to cover a neglected injury.”¹³ Scott Saul further explains, “How we diffuse this love is by welcoming aliens and strangers and building cities of refuge for the vulnerable and how God so loved the world...the whole world.”¹⁴

The contemporary outward-focusing church should consist of missionaries committed to bringing God’s message to all people and communities. Carl Dudley shares an essential aspect of such social involvement: “Uniting with the community presses the church beyond servant and partner modes and invites the church to stand with the oppressed when that community needs a voice and strength.”¹⁵ An unexpected response comes from George Barna as he reveals, “One reason why many unchurched adults may ignore the Bible is because of the version that they own.”¹⁶ I cannot entirely agree with Barna’s statement. If some people do not attend church, I surmise the presence of other factors behind such a situation. Wayne Jacobsen makes a thought-provoking statement in this regard: “Those who had attacked the church had turned their anger

¹³ Les Isaac and Rosalind Davies, *Faith on the Streets: Christians in Action through the Street Pastors Movement*, 2014, accessed October 24, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/faithonstreetsch0000isaa>.

¹⁴ Scott Sauls, *Befriend: Create Belonging in an Age of Judgment, Isolation, and Fear*. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 2016).

¹⁵ Carl S. Dudley, ed., *Next Steps in Community Ministry: Hands-on Leadership* (Bethesda, Md.: Alban Institute, 1996).

¹⁶ G. Barna and D. Kinnaman, *Understanding the Unchurched and How to Reach Them*. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2014).

toward Jesus himself, mocking him as an imposter, wait until you have to look in his face as you sink into hell! Hateful words are destructive and will ruin the church's witnessing potential."¹⁷ This claim indicates that to love Jesus means to share in His nature.

In his book *Jesus in the Margins*, Rick McKinley writes, "There's an illusion of safety in isolation; I won't be known there. If I am not known, I can't be rejected."¹⁸ Isolation is sadly a common cause of dissatisfaction in many people's lives. McKinley speaks to everyone, affluent and impoverished, reminding that God knows them all and realizes what it is like to be shoved to the periphery of society and accepted a life lived in its margins.

Keith Foster discusses the biblical story of an affluent tax collector reaching out to Jesus. Instead of repelling him, Jesus accepted and welcomed him by proclaiming, "Today salvation has come to this house today because he also is a son of Abraham." (Luke 19:9 [NKJV]). Thus, a precedent was established, a mission given to all His disciples since then to the present day. The church's mission is to approach entire communities, instead of discriminating between the poor and the rich in terms of outreach. Indeed, Jesus declared that it was difficult for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God, but it was not impossible. Foster expands, "The self-sufficiency of the rich produced a spiritual vulnerability; I believe that we all here, yet by and large, the church ignores this."¹⁹

Madeline Levine shares a distressing story of one of her patients, a well-mannered fifteen-year-old girl, who played on her school's hockey team and excelled academically. However, her affluent parents exceedingly pressured her to improve even further, resulting in a deeply disturbing occurrence in her life: "She had a razor to incise the word EMPTY on her left forearm." Levine

¹⁷ Wayne Jacobsen and Dave Coleman, *So You Don't Want to Go To Church Anyway* (Newbury Park, CA: Windblown Media, 2006).

¹⁸ Rick McKinley, *Jesus in the Margins* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2005).

¹⁹ Keith Foster, *Whatever Happened To The Rich Young Man. The Church and the New Marginalized* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020).

further laments, “I tried to imagine how intensely unhappy my young patient must have felt to cut her distress into her flesh.”²⁰ This example could be the harbinger of a stark and disturbing warning for future generations of the spiritually impoverished who are deprived of safe and warm spaces.

The institution of the church itself makes assumptions about how to evaluate people, especially the spatialized affluent, and how to reflect upon the poor in the context of a safe space like home. Terence Lester writes about something we all yearn for: “Home is more than four walls and a roof, more than the place where you put your head down at night or where you store your most valuable possessions. Home is where you feel safe with people you can count on and be yourself. A home is a place of unconditional belonging. No matter what you do or where you go, home is the place you can come back to and belong.”²¹

Evolution of Street Pastors

Regarding the creation of safe and homely spaces, Street Pastors are a welcome appearance in the streets across the U.K.: they lend a kind ear to people, assisting nighttime revelers in getting home and preserving the peace and safety of their respective towns. This incredible charity was founded in 2003 by Rev Les Isaac O.B.E., Rev. David Shosanya, and P.C. Ian Crichlow, as a church-based reaction to the escalating prevalence of gun and knife crime in Britain’s metropolitan regions. Worried about the lack of security in Britain’s inner cities, Street Pastors started volunteering their skills to assist nighttime revelers and spread word about the wonderful goal that they sought to achieve.²² Since their inauspicious beginning, Street Pastors have been aided by God’s hand as their project has turned into a major national and international charity, whose

²⁰ M. Levine, *The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).

²¹ Terence Lester, *I See You: How Love Opens Our Eyes to Invisible People* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2019).

²² Evangelical Alliance, *Faith in the Community: Strengthening Ties between Faith Groups and Local Authorities*.

volunteers not only combat gun and knife crime in urban areas but also ensure that nighttime revelers get home safely, offer invaluable personalized help, administer first aid when required, and lighten tense scenarios. Inspired by the Scriptures, Street Pastors engage with vulnerable individuals, respond to public disturbance, and allay possible feelings of fear in individuals during a night out. Their fundamental purpose is to offer a helping hand without preaching or bias.

This research examines various aspects of Street Pastors' work, including how they help to regulate Britain's nighttime economy and their motivations behind volunteering. It also discusses the arrival of Street Pastors in the United States of America (U.S.A.).

Street Pastors are part of a long Victorian history of moral entrepreneurship that regards moderation and sobriety as essential Christian qualities capable of combating drinking issues.²³ Insofar as investigators have already shown concerns about the link between Christian faith and security problems arising from, say, public drunkenness, their focus has been on the negative impacts of religious conviction on aberrant behavior rather than the positive effect that faith-based proposals such as Street Pastors may have on people. In fact, however, Street Pastors often act as embodiments of confidence for partygoers in an isolated, sometimes hostile, nighttime atmosphere.²⁴ They strive to make revelers feel secure by providing them care and assistance, a feature that should divert criminology's attention away from its limited concentration on punitive action for nighttime crimes. After all, security governance involves more than just correcting what is broken; it is also about preserving the finest traits among people. Until recently, criminologists have mostly dismissed this more positive viewpoint.²⁵ Second, and related to this lacuna, the goal of fully fleshing out what Street Pastors do and what drives them demands an investigation of how

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Les Isaac, *Street Pastors* (Eastbourne: Kings Communications, 2009), 19.

security may be viewed in more optimistic and generative ways, in contrast to law enforcement tactics that are focused on merely combatting and redressing instances of crime.

In the above context, Eric Mason imagines, “People have intricate lives that include economic, social, cultural, sensory, and psychological events and some form of injustice.”²⁶ People perceive impediments to happiness and safety not only in the economic relations of their everyday lives but also in their social interactions, in the sense of their significance or openness to others, in how they are treated, and in the few opportunities of social/economic mobility or betterment they can avail. Indeed, poverty, as a broad term, has long been a cause of concern in both developed and developing countries, and most civilizations, governments, economists, and labor activists continue working to alleviate or eliminate it. For example, in reacting to inequality, the United Nations and its sister organizations have been attempting to improve developing countries’ socioeconomic performance. In this vein, Bryant L. Myers adds, “Several non-profit organizations have extended their engagement in service and growth sectors aimed at the poorest of the poor.”²⁷

This statement suggests that scientific or rational observations regarding poverty and inequality are typically focused on broader systemic challenges rather than focusing on clearly defined policy sectors or associated topics. These observations are concomitantly concerned about resilience and threats, notably the stresses and disruptions created by different kinds of disparity, and they address the needs of people who feel increasingly cut off from related assistance. They assume that inequality is the result of external factors. Such concerns revolve around fragility regarding and greater susceptibility to economic risks and market abuse, marked by unstable work, low pay, poor treatment, and a lack of service- and business-encouraging circumstances. These

²⁵ Eric Mason, *Woke Church: An Urgent Call for Christians In America To Confront Racism And Injustice* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2018).

²⁷ Bryant L Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011).

assertions also reveal the perception of power among people who do not have control over funds, expenditure, or service-related decisions. Thus, in the eradication of poverty, understanding the intricacies of community realities can help those with power, income, and influence create more effective anti-inequality policies and bring themselves closer to the economically deprived populations. If the marginalized are dispossessed or living in poverty, the spatialized may live in affluence but remain spiritually destitute. Therefore, community unity must be the ultimate goal among people: we must forge a bond between people of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and spiritual demands to create a more equal world under God.

While the factual and exemplary material of this research originates from a single area, its themes are shared by cities and locales in various parts of U.S.A. and even throughout the world. More research is required to reinforce these above findings regarding increased poverty due to inequity, but at present they present some clear routes to new remedies. In this vein, the church as an institution can act as a “city on a hill,” analyzing essential paradigm shifts and resources and developing a plan to address its subjects’ current socioeconomic problems.

Expansion to the United States of America

Street Pastors constitute an interdenominational Christian program that aims to reduce crime, rehabilitate individuals on the fringes of society, and develop more robust and balanced communities. A ministry deploying Street Pastors collaborates with the government and its authorities, producing an “Urban Trinity” of church, police, and state that works together to address social issues. This way, thousands of people in a church might be mobilized and pushed to effect positive change in its surrounding community.

Urban Trinity is all about collaboration for community welfare. A government assists its society's most disadvantaged members, while the police not only arrest criminals but also prevent crime. Moreover, the police participate in the Street Pastors' training, providing the latter procedural and safety-related advice regarding working in the nighttime environment.

Such a collaborative efforts at community welfare is imperative for Chelmsford's NewSong Community Church. As mentioned, Chelmsford has a diverse socioeconomic structure that includes forty percent of poor inhabitants from Lowell, Massachusetts, with the remaining sixty percent, from the Chelmsford region, representing the rich. These two cities are physically contiguous and yet worlds apart regarding their social, economic, and ethnic aspects. This research offers a proactive technique to assess how the NewSong congregation may serve as a model for gathering together the spiritually destitute, independent of poverty's isolation or wealth's spatialization, via its Street Pastor expertise.

People perceive inequality as relational, which is evident in the discrepancy between what some possess, and others do not. In fact, they face challenges not only regarding the economic aspects of their lives but also in their social relationships, their sense of value or vulnerability towards others, of how they are regarded, and of the opportunities available to them. Terrence Lester poignantly states, "I challenge you to ask what real choice many of them had. In most cases, those experiencing poverty have not had a real opportunity to see what it looks like to live differently. Regardless of their choice, though, they are not monsters but rather persons with a story who do not deserve to be feared."²⁸

People see prejudice, lack of participation, and interest among young folks in various communities, as well as a dearth of chances and ambition for them. Thus, inequality is felt

²⁸ Lester, *I See You*.

socioeconomically and is very stigmatizing in the U.S.A. Such stigma is experienced on a regular basis and considerably impacts social well-being. Being placed in a position in which one has little control over others, who appear to have unlimited power, exacerbates socioeconomic inequality. Today, people feel that such inequality has become blatant and uncontrollable, and that their ability to confront those in positions of power and wealth has diminished. In general, there is a perception that one's ability to have a credible and influential impact on society is often a result of his/her wealth and social standing. This view implies a greater understanding of how socioeconomic disparity operates.

However, this market-oriented approach cannot account for the achievements of the British Street Pastors model in the nighttime industry of other locales. Not everyone regards human value as primarily influenced by commercial and economic rationalities. Street Pastors, who have mostly gone unnoticed in scholarly discussions of the nighttime economy and socioeconomic succor, have a distinct view of and approach to drunken partygoers in urban spaces. In keeping with the Bible's wisdom, they recognize everyone's inherent dignity, as a kind and loving God welcomes all regardless of the quality of their actions. Rather than encouraging partygoers to drink or denouncing offenders for any wrongdoing, Street Pastors respond to issues such as anti-social behavior, public disruption, and insecure feelings, by caring for, listening to, and interacting with vulnerable individuals on the streets at night. To reiterate, their fundamental purpose is to be present without preaching or showing any form of bias.

Pastors on the Street

Re-evaluating the church's role in the community, the induction of Street Pastors ushers in a new approach towards ministry that unites churches and para-church ministries with purposeful

degrees of continuity. Following Jesus, Street Pastors abide by the wisdom of Mother Teresa, who gave precious insights into how she was called and why she loved her ministry: “My call is not to serve the poor, my call is to follow the poor. My call is to follow Jesus.”²⁹ Thus, when investigating how local churches may come together despite ideological divides and the threat of sheep stealing, one should follow Mother Teresa’s words well.

Historically, uniting the clergy from various areas has been proved as an ineffective task. Interpreting the Exodus events, this might be understood as God’s intervention in favor of the impoverished; there was a focus on caring for the least fortunate. Indeed, the presence and grievances of the destitute are acknowledged in both the New and Old Testaments. Therefore, the church today should be active in fulfilling the Bible’s instructions on aiding the poor. In truth, the people of Israel were meant to physically assist the destitute in addition to praying on their behalf. As an institution, the church has also been praying for the destitute, but praying alone is insufficient, as evident by the contributions of the Israelites.

Hence, today’s underprivileged populace must be supported and given the confident assurance that it will finally triumph. The human dignity of the socioeconomically impoverished must be safeguarded to prevent their shame and to make them retain the image of God, who created them. Instead of mere handouts, churches should emulate the Israelites’ great regard for the impoverished and empower the deprived holistically. In fact, one of the primary reasons Jesus arrived was to spread the Good News to the poor and free the oppressed. He recognized the existence of disadvantaged people and the need to assist them—a truth which should be heeded by the church and its constituents.

²⁹ 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).

In a similar vein, one can take the example of Cynthia Trenshaw, a widow, professional massage therapist, and devout pilgrim, who demonstrates unconditional love and acceptance towards all in the worst possible conditions. Her mission is in the Tenderloin area in San Francisco. Her ministry requires her to contact and care for sex workers and the homeless, while operating in the ministry of presence. One day, after a client's massage, the client stated to Cynthia that life was not only about giving but also receiving, using the word "reciprocal."³⁰

Moreover, Jesus treated the sick and fed the multitude on multiple occasions. The early church also acknowledged the need to support the deprived. In turn, Jesus' compassion for the poor appeals to the churches of the twenty-first century, which exhort His teachings and practices in their communities, especially directed towards those living in abject socioeconomic poverty. People who comprehend Jesus' teachings are inspired to help the needy. NewSong Community Church has developed one such prosperous group of people, with several new families adding themselves to the NewSong community.

Although certain churches may provide comprehensive ministry, Denise Wendle claims that "advocacy is required to reduce both tangible and spiritual poverty in communities."³¹ Thus, involving a church in initiatives that economically and spiritually serve the poor is one possible strategy for enabling the church to teach and empower the needy. If a church plans to teach and implement programs to strengthen the poor, its parishioners and the surrounding community may feel motivated enough to participate in its endeavor to combat poverty. Therefore, NewSong Community Church in Chelmsford aims to accomplish the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and to praise God in all things. However, this church's engagement in initiatives that physically support

³⁰ Cynthia Trenshaw, *Meeting in the Margins: An Invitation to Encounter Society's Invisible People* (Berkeley, CA: She Writes Press, 2015).

³¹ Denise Wendle, *Turn Compassion to Action: Real Life Stories, Practical Tools, Motivational Guide for Compassion Ministries* (Palm Tree Productions, 2018).

members with socioeconomic needs remains relatively limited. Therefore, it needs to heed the advice of J. Hudson Taylor, who avers, “The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.”³² The Great Commission chapter should assist NewSong in following Jesus’ ministry model. This way, NewSong can help a person in need to receive Jesus’ Good News through care, empathy, food, and clothing.

In this respect, this research specifically investigates church leaders’ knowledge of and training in the battle against socioeconomic poverty. This is because lack of training in poverty eradication may lead to a paucity of active initiatives dealing with poverty-related concerns. Moreover, some individuals may be unaware of the importance of holistic ministry, while others may misinterpret the relevant Biblical texts. Since every church has the responsibility of helping and uplifting the poor, ongoing research is critical for identifying a viable solution to socioeconomic poverty that would enable churches to become pre-emptive in terms of addressing such poverty among its members and the broader community.

To that end, this research’s findings assist the author in determining how to approach the issue of socioeconomic poverty in group discussions, classroom instructions, and sermons. They also propose ways to create a curriculum geared towards poverty eradication training in Massachusetts, for the benefit other churches, colleges, and the entire populace. In summary, this study aims to make religious leaders in the Lowell area recognize the importance of empowering the socioeconomically poor. It also strives to inspire common people to act and become a part of the solution to the impoverishment that many Christians in Massachusetts face. Crucially, it highlights a related lack of motivation among religious leaders, as they are found to remain primarily inactive in combating regional poverty.

³² Harvest University, “The Great Commission Is Not an Option to Be Considered.,” Harvest University, last modified 2020, accessed September 15, 2022, <https://harvestuniv.org/the-great-commission-is-not-an-option-to-be-considered/>.

The Biblical Basis of Poverty

Poverty is a societal problem that arose after the Fall. According to the author, poverty in any form did not exist before humans were created. God is the God of abundance, and it defies logic to picture God creating humans in His likeness and appearance but not ensuring they have enough to sustain themselves. In fact, the Creation story in Genesis depicts a close connection between humans and God. Unlike every other creature, God created humans in His image. (Gen. 1:27). He supplied Adam and Eve with everything they would need, and they gladly accepted the duties that God handed over to them.

The earth was entrusted to man as God's steward, and the mandate to dominate the world did not entail a transfer of ownership of the planet and its contents but rather placed man in a submissive role in relation to God. God would still own his creation, but He delegated its stewardship to man. Christopher J. H. Wright discusses the mission of God and His purpose for his people in the context of the whole world, asserting that God's mission started from the foundation of Genesis and culminated in the Revelation. Wright probes, "Who are we, and what are we here for? What is our mission?"³³

Departing from Wright's teachings, Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile explore five historical periods in the context of the history of the American church, from colonial times to the present day. They ask, "What is the relationship between the church and culture? What is the relationship between gospel and culture?"³⁴

³³ Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2010).

³⁴ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J.Zscheile, *Participating In Gods Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018).

Michael W. Goheen, unlike the previous authors, masterfully articulates the impassioned stance of Leslie Newbigin, one of the twentieth century's most important church leaders. Goheen delicately asks insightful questions about how the church should be adapting to shifting circumstances in a secular world, tweaking the above author's questions into the following: "Who are we? What is our role in the biblical story? What is our vocation? How are we called to serve God's purposes?"³⁵

The ownership and productivity of our planet are indeed in God's hands. Therefore, any claims of economic or spiritual ownership by individuals, groups, or nations are subordinate and subservient to God's possession. Although humans are entrusted with the maintenance of the world, it ultimately belongs to Him.

A passage in Psalms states that the world and all its creatures belong to God, and humans are given the task of governing this worldly domain (Ps. 24). While humans may dominate the world, they live under God's dominion, taking care of and enjoying its riches, which ultimately belong God. As humans cannot repay God's benevolence, they must be good stewards and use the resources He provided to make humanity prosperous, along with the rest of the world. Hence, when people help their fellow human beings, they acknowledge their dependence on God and the reality that they are in His dominion, just as Adam and Eve enjoyed the Garden of Eden and were asked to His best stewards.

God expects human beings to care for their land, the creatures who live on it, and their fellow humans. Life can be easier for everyone if individuals remain faithful to God and empower their fellows. His Kingdom can live in a person's heart, in entire communities, and in the whole of nature. God's Word is as vast and all-encompassing as His presence, which also renews, changes, and reproduces everything it meets. Thus, our creation in the likeness of God necessitates an

³⁵ Michael W. Goheen, *The Church and Its Vocation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2018).

explicit knowledge of why we, as humans, exist. Anything we do should be in praise of God and spread His values to our friends.

Notably, the purpose of the Creation tale is not merely to explain why we were created but to make us realize that God was the one who formed the entire cosmos; He is not bound to a specific location, which should inspire in us an appreciation of existence in itself. The above realization should also arouse every church's interest in addressing their needs to escape their tragic circumstances.

In this regard, Francisco F. Claver S. J. discussed the concept of belonging to a "Global village"³⁶ in which the church's role is to promote justice and peace. Accordingly, the dominion given to man is bolstered by the balance between two major aspects: the entire human population's fruitfulness and growth, and the world's availability of resources to sustain humans. Therefore, dominion should not be utilized to exploit the poor or the less able; instead, leadership in the image of God entails caring for all the fruits of creation.

In other words, the Creation tale exhorts humans to care for the rest of nature. It is worth mentioning here that this account also entrusts certain obligations to humans. These include saturating the world, subduing it, controlling it, and caring for it. God invites the church to join Him in reaching and transforming every tribe, people, ethnicity, and nation of the world. This extraordinary mosaic emerges from God's extravagant hospitality, welcome, and love.³⁷ In His name, humans are granted the ability to organize and control the prosperity of the world. Humans are expected to relish what God has given them by governing the world, making it fertile as God's

³⁶ Séamus O'Fógartaigh, "Liberation Theology: A Catalyst for Social Change in Ireland and Latin America," *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*, last modified 2011, accessed June 23, 2021, https://www.irlandeses.org/imsla2011_7_04_10_Seamus_OFogartaigh2.htm.

³⁷ Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Graham Hill, *Healing Our Broken Humanity: Practices for Revitalizing the Church and Renewing the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018).

best stewards. To do the same, we must be concerned about all facets of human existence, from justice and economic empowerment to spiritual edification, and above all we must be peacemakers.

Today, humanity faces numerous difficulties, and the church has a significant duty to be at the forefront of offering the methods and means to address and overcome them. We and our churches must live up to the excellent standards that God has set for humans, to whom he has entrusted the world in all its beauty. Facilitating the distribution of wealth, balance of nature, strong marriages and families, human governance, preservation of peace and culture, and liberation of the oppressed are all salient global tasks that we must accomplish. Individuals who have been reborn into the Kingdom of God, and decide to live under the rule of Jesus Christ, must enhance their lives by encouraging shalom to the greatest possible extent, since God desires that all of humanity dwell in shalom.

On the Streets of Faith

A struggle is a situation in which one carries the heavy burden of life, searching for purpose and happiness through life's catastrophes. For every person in this world, struggle is indispensable as it illustrates how persistence could overcome obstacles. Without life's problems, one cannot find the confidence of experience; it is only through a myriad of complications that one develops self-belief and a feeling of purpose in life. In other words, tragedies and hardships have the power to shape one's outlook.

Faith is one such struggle that forges the strongest of us through its trials and tribulations. Someone who has endured adversity with faith will be inclined to be empathetic to others, put

humans over material wealth, and become far wiser than someone who has never faced distress. When we overcome adversity, we learn to appreciate the value of faith even more.³⁸

According to the Creation account, God's wanted humanity to continue enjoying their connection to Him, but the Fall harmed that relationship. Nonetheless, God wanted to restore that broken friendship. To mend the shattered connection, the impoverished Jesus Christ had to sacrifice his life.

Similarly, poor faith is an intrinsic human condition and is marked by the denial of two human realities: facticity and transcendence. Facticity is the presence of facts over which one has no control, while transcendence refers to one's existence or experience beyond the normal or the physical level. Indeed, ill faith entails denying one's capacity for transcendence.

In his book, *The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis articulates a refreshing thought: "Those who accept His offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and loneliness."³⁹ Therefore, those who claim faith in Jesus Christ are expected to dedicate their lives to making peace among everyone, particularly the poor. A hungry, unwell, or oppressed individual may find it challenging to feel shalom. However, they will be thankful and optimistic if they can take care of their everyday needs. To that end, the church can serve its community by working in tandem with all whose hearts are full of goodwill. If the church is to take a lead in the eradication of poverty, it must serve, apply the creative energies released in Christ towards the stewardship of creation, and bring fallen structures closer to God's original purposes.⁴⁰

Just like Jesus spread the Good News of the Kingdom, churches should also continue declaring the Kingdom of God and approach the ill, hungry, and bereaved, providing them hope and

³⁸ Isaac and Davies, *Faith on the Streets*.

³⁹ Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2013), 197.

⁴⁰ Bryant L Myers, *Walking With The Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2011).

succor. Thus, the central theme of Pope Francis' words is redemption. This redemption is spiritual as well as material. One must remember that God has not ceased the restoration and redemption of all creation. To aid in salvaging and releasing individuals bound to this world from agony, it is necessary to connect with and assist them in finding freedom with Christ. In other words, God's people should strive for acts of kindness and pledge to eliminate all kinds of poverty, aid each other, and ensure that everyone has everything needed for a good life.

However, a critical report called "Faith in the City" exposes the governments' inertia with respect to offering social services, education, and income support, leading to the exacerbation of the plight of impoverished communities. In turn, this report's positively underlines the importance of the church's presence in urban areas, especially while governments, businesses, and other institutes keep abandoning the urban poor.⁴¹

While this research does not recommend quick answers to the difficulties and challenges of poverty, the early church practice of selling assets and donating the subsequent proceeds to the poor should be prioritized at once. However, more realistic, and long-term solutions to the current problems of poverty may be implemented by the church. For instance, the church must reach out in kindness to more individuals who could assemble in the manner of the early Christians, expanding its disciples and ensuring its growth. While good deeds alone cannot merit salvation, they can serve as motivation to heed God's Word. Acts of kindness have an essential role in spreading the message of God. Nothing opens people's hearts more than a loving ministry for bodily and emotional needs; thus, the responsibility of God's children is to undertake ministry that can satisfy people's most significant needs. In this regard, Terence Lester poignantly writes, "The home is more than four

⁴¹ Elaine Graham and Stephen Lowe, *What Makes A Good City? Public Theology and the Urban Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2009).

walls and a roof. Home is where you feel safe, with people you can count on, and where you can be yourself.”⁴²

This research encourages the church to be charitable, in order to avoid facing the repercussions of severity. Indeed, the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus is recorded in the Bible: the rich man had a fortune but did not help Lazarus, and God chastised him. Thus, to escape His reprimand, one must understand the needs of the poor and aim for their liberation. On this matter, the Bible is unequivocal: if we grow rich by oppressing the poor or become prosperous but do not contribute to the needy, the Lord will turn against us. God assesses societies based on their treatment of their poor. He remains concerned about the impoverished, and hence someone who selflessly helps the destitute pleases to the Lord. However, those who are harsh and unloving towards the deprived end up disparaging God. Unfortunately, there are some who still claim that God is a God of riches, that He wants to bless you, and that if you are right with God, you will be prosperous. They imply that if you are not rich, then you are not right with God! Instead of encouraging such assumptions, Mark Rutland moderates, “Stranded in between these two extremes is a great body of people who are living day-to-day on the money that they can earn while trying to provide for their families and improve their life.”⁴³

To help these precarious poor, the church must first realize the importance of steadfast stewardship of its own finances. In a sermon entitled “The Use of Money,” John Wesley preached, “Of the three rules which are laid down...you may find many that observe the first rule, namely, ‘Gain all you can.’ You may find a few that observe the second, ‘Save all you can.’ However, how many have observed the third rule, ‘Give all you can.’⁴⁴ Valentin explores this line of through

⁴² Terence Lester, *I See You: How Love Opens Our Eyes To Invisible People* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2019).

⁴³ Mark Rutland, *Character Matters: Nine Essential Traits You Need to Succeed* (Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House, 2003).

⁴⁴ Resource UMC, “John Wesley on Giving,” modified April 23, 2021, <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/john-wesley-on-giving>.

further, in the context of Latino/Hispanic communities, and clarifies that selfishness influences the economic and cultural stances of the affluent: “The few who are truly wealthy and have profited from the upward distribution of wealth and goods in our society usually have little or no desire to entertain thoughts of a more just public sphere because they benefit from the exploitation and misery of the greater society.”⁴⁵

Valentin continues with a troublesome thought: “The poor members of the increasingly wearied middle class understandably find it difficult to muster up the energy to consider a broader public vision or good and to participate in the public decisions that fundamentally affect their lives because so much effort is being spent either trying to secure a more decent living or just trying to survive.” He concludes that such isolation of the poor exacerbates economic and social inequality and leads to the fragmentation of communities.”⁴⁶

On a similar note, Pope Francis summarizes the young rich ruler’s narratives with the challenging words: “Not to share one’s wealth with the poor is to steal from them and take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs.”⁴⁷

On the other hand, empowering the poor pleases the Lord. Hence, the Bible calls for the church to be an advocate and voice of the voiceless: the church must make a clarion call to action for justice and stand on the front lines in the ensuing struggle by the oppressed. C. Rene Padilla extends this stance and states, “To speak the kingdom of God is to speak of God’s redemptive purpose for the whole creation. The mission of the church, therefore, can be understood only in light of the Kingdom of God.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Benjamin Valentin, *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Differences* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Pope Francis, *The Joy of The Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium*, First. (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2014).

⁴⁸ Padilla, *Mission between the Times*

As we build God's Kingdom, we must underline the importance of social justice in it, as per insights of the New Testament: it commands that we love our neighbors as we love ourselves, indicating a deep concern and consideration for all. We cannot love our neighbors while at the same time treating them brutally. To show our love, we must care for others, for only then can we mirror God's nature. Bob Roberts Jr. seeks this care when he asks, "Where is the church today speaking to justice and mercy? Where is the church today serving as a prophet to society?"⁴⁹

To do justice is to give to each what is due. Such an act reveals the God-like essence of every individual, bestowing intrinsic dignity and boundless value to all persons. Because God created all humans carefully and wonderfully, we must reflect God's image in all our interactions with others, especially the impoverished.

The above outlook is integral to the relevance of the church in Lowell, Massachusetts, which is among the least religious cities in U.S.A. Of course, there might be numerous other reasons behind the recurrence of poverty, but the church cannot claim that it is unaware of Lowell's questionable record in terms of religiosity. Although colonialists are mostly to blame for the predominance of poverty in Lowell, religion should assist us in renewing our hope and, more significantly, in getting over our past. The church should bear testimony to its promise of eradicating poverty with confidence and minutely follow the scriptures to positively act on this issue.

In addition, the idea of God should undergo a radical transformation: God may be found even amid the suffering and struggles of the deprived. When the church starts actively assisting those in need, it shows that it is on God's side and is acting in accordance with His desire. In truth, God's assistance in freeing the impoverished and downtrodden is evidenced throughout the Bible.

⁴⁹ Roberts, *Transformation: How Global Churches Transform Lives and the World*.

The Exodus narrative demonstrates God's might, if we focus on the instance when the enslaved Israelites were released. When the oppressed cried out to the Lord, He answered their cries and took them out of Egypt. The critical moments of Exodus narrative were the freeing of the enslaved, the fulfillment of the commitment with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God's self-revelation to a unique group of people. Indeed, God aimed to free humanity so they would worship and care for the rest of creation.

Hence, it is an excellent biblical practice to assist individuals in meeting their needs. However, it may frequently lead such people to become dependent on others. Therefore, those eager to help others in the name of God should inculcate empowerment rather than dependency. In fact, the impoverished were expected to go to the fields and obtain food for themselves; their food was not merely delivered to them. Those who were clever may have even saved some seeds for planting in the future.

Clearly, the Bible advises against idleness, and thus the poor must be willing to be a part of the solution to their own predicament. If the deprived are allowed to succeed themselves, their dignity can be restored in the eyes of God. Hence, the Exodus occurrences should be regarded as God's involvement on behalf of the impoverished, but there is more to the story than simple liberation. Liberation of the poor necessitates careful preparation since every enslaved individual will have certain fundamental requirements. Today, they must be assisted in obtaining employment or developing a robust income-generating strategy. Further, when educating or preaching to the impoverished, it is critical to exercise caution: we must never idealize the impoverished while discussing them or conveying the Good News to them.

The Poor in the Society

Poor folks may live a life of agony and pain, may be exceedingly furious, recalcitrant, or depressed, but their dignity must be preserved and protected as per God's will. The Incarnation account in Luke indicates that the gospel was intended for everyone, especially the poor, in order to free the captives and offer them emancipation (Lk 4:18–19). Analyzing the moment when the matter of their liberation was raised, and it becomes evident that Jesus was talking about material, bodily concerns. This feature of embodiment also acknowledges God's genuine love for the impoverished. Thus, Jesus urged John's followers to inform John that the penurious had heard the Good News. Jesus also shared a tale about how the needy would be invited to banqueting feast while others declined His invitation.

According to Luke, the impoverished are blessed, and the destitute might be considered as waiting for the "Good News" (Lk 1–2). Luke wrote extensively on the impoverished, implying that it was one of his major worries at the time. Today, Jesus might arrive as a great King or Emperor, but in the past, he earned his living as a carpenter in a humble village (Lk 4:18–19). He was quite familiar with poverty, having been born and raised in very modest settings (Lk 2:7). In other words, He had a low socioeconomic status: as per the Torah, Mary and Joseph's gift at the temple—a pair of turtle doves or two baby pigeons—was the sacrifice required for people who could not even afford a lamb. Thereafter, to identify with all types of people, Jesus had to appear as a low-class person. His love for the poor, ill, and outcast attests to humanity's desire to care for all. About Jesus' mission, the prophet Isaiah said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, as He has chosen me to proclaim the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the imprisoned and sight to the blind, to set free those oppressed, and to herald the Lord's appropriate year." (Lk 4:18).

The Rise of Street Pastors in Massachusetts

Religion makes an essential contribution to the culture of public affairs in U.S.A., perhaps most notably in the profession of social work. Christian churches have a long history of providing services, influencing people, and offering material and cultural resources. However, the importance of religion in policy development and service administration began to decrease since the early-to-mid twentieth century, because of societal secularization and the impact of critical intellectuals like Marx and Freud. One of the primary associated obstacles for religion was the perception that it had an ignoble record of bigotry and tyranny that went against public welfare objectives (Lk 4:18–19). It may be argued that the advent of the post-second world-war welfare state reduced the necessity for direct engagement by the church. However, as with many elements of social policy, those welfare reforms left a gap in terms of the depth and breadth of service provision, which has now been filled by third-sector organizations, some of which are faith-based. These organizations also appear to be influenced by Christian socialist views. As a result, today legislators increasingly view organized religious groups as suitable advocates of public policy.

In this light, Street Pastors constitute an inter-denominational reaction to community concerns as they attempt to offer honest answers to the pressing issues of the present rather than just preaching. As mentioned, Street Pastors engage disaffected young people and other susceptible populations through their outreach tactics. Before an individual is chosen as a Street Pastor, he/she must meet both the practical requirements of the commercial world and the spiritual, faith-based necessities of the Christian standards. In terms of the former, everyone must pass a Criminal Records Bureau check before proceeding on the path of a street Pastor, while the latter demands volunteers in the Street Pastor movement to have a strong faith and a religious commitment to serve others in their areas. After completing a rigorous twelve-week training program, Street Pastors are

allowed join a patrol team. Their Squads are noticeable, and they sport a uniform of luminous jackets and baseball caps.

The Street Pastors' development in U.S.A. has been astounding today, they run the length of the country. While they work in the auspices of the Ascension Trust, they have a significant local autonomy, and their approval/admittance is achieved at a local level. Therefore, any democratic evaluation of their movement must be undertaken at the regional/local levels.

Street Pastors in Massachusetts Locales

Several communities in the Merrimack valley area of Massachusetts are perceived as toxic, with visible schisms between the privileged and the poor. Here, the work of Street Pastors arouses a new hope of engagement with street people in both daytime and nighttime economies. To elaborate, Street Pastors provide assistance and guidance to the vulnerable or the interested in the nighttime economy; most of their patrols begin around 10 p.m. at night and end in the early hours of the following morning. The time before a patrol allows Street Pastors to prepare for their work physically and mentally, while also marking a transition from their everyday routines to their role as Street Pastors. Unfortunately, at times Street Pastors have been stigmatized because some people believe they preach for profit.⁵⁰ Such skeptics must realize that the poverty-related topics mentioned in the Bible are still relevant to the ordinary layperson. Street Pastors talk about reality by relating the Bible to everyday life. Whether or not they are accepted, their work is supposed to be a gift to

⁵⁰ Antony Bushfield, "Church Makes More Money than McDonalds and Starbucks but Still in the Red.," Religious, *Premier Christian News*, last modified November 13, 2015, accessed October 2, 2022, <https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/church-makes-more-money-than-mcdonald-s-and-starbucks-but-still-in-the-red>.

others: they reach out with a compassionate hand to restore the dignity and improve the conditions of the poor.

In the early days of the Street Pastors project, statutory entities were concerned that Street Pastors might turn out to be just like missionaries and street preachers. On the contrary, Street Pastors have proved that while they are inspired by their Christian beliefs, their primary goal is to give practical care to the vulnerable on the streets. Some critics also believe that Street Pastors might have a hidden agenda as they reach out to neighborhoods, participate in public life, and work with their partners to ensure a safe city. Indeed, they may be busy accomplishing all these goals, but the primary goal of a Street Pastor is to teach others about God. Street Pastors believe that Jesus was concerned with the whole story, as it were. He cared for the total individual, including his/her familial bonds and feelings of belonging. Following Jesus, Street Pastors, among many other Christian organizations and programs, believe that their primary obligation is to serve as a vessel spreading Jesus' love throughout the world by responding to the difficulties/problems in the streets through social action.

Further, we are noticing the emergence of new forums for spiritual dialogue thanks to the excellent work of Street Pastors. These Pastors encounter people and respond to their religion-related questions in public spaces, on the streets. Thereby, they have facilitated a new level of people's participation in Christianity.

Massachusetts Nonprofit Network

Adding to the Street Pastors movement, the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network (MNN) is a national organization in U.S.A. devoted to unifying and improving the nonprofit field, with regard to poverty eradication, through public awareness, advocacy, and capacity-building. MNN has over

700 nonprofit members who serve their communities. Together, these incredible institutions and their numerous members serve as the soul of their communities and are significant economic drivers as well.⁵¹

In this vein, Chelmsford's NewSong Community Church must note that setting up or partnering with a non-profit organization is not an easy task; it must first ensure that there is an unmet societal need, and that no currently active groups address such a problem. Therefore, NewSong must carefully establish an organization that assists the needy in its surrounding community and bridges the gap between the affluent and the poor. Also, collaboration with other relevant and established groups should be considered as an enhanced strategy to ensure positive effects among the poor in its locale. Altogether, NewSong should embrace the work of charity since it is a critical element in the ultimate aim of holistically eradicating poverty.

⁵¹ *Massachusetts Nonprofit Network*, last modified 2021, accessed November 1, 2022, <http://massnonprofitnet.org>.

CHAPTER THREE

Thesis

This research puts forth concerns about the fragmented and arbitrary operations of the church, which as an institution has often adopted a tradition of spoon-feeding the poor in various communities, which leads it to harbor a feed-them-and-run attitude. Likewise, the church glosses over the spatialized affluent but fail to recognize their spiritual needs, thereby shortchanging their equally neglected communities. To bring these populations together in the endeavor to eradicate poverty, first, a recalibration of the church's thinking is required: it must adopt a fresh approach for unifying the ecclesia, reduce the duplication of its work, and find practical ways to reach both affluent and deprived communities.⁵² This research, thus, proposes a theoretical solution to the abovementioned issue and answers its research questions, thereby attempting to enable the church to achieve its desired goals.

Tackling several aspects of poverty will bring refreshing lease of life for both the spatialized affluent and impoverished communities. Whether it is the lost who live in million-dollar houses or the one who sleeps in a tent or lives under a bridge, hidden in plain sight, a re-energized and focus-driven ecclesia, focused on distributing love to all, could rekindle a flame that may be nearly extinguished for some.

A problematic aspect of today's church leaders is that they appear insecure and suspicious of others like them, believing that they will lose their members to other churches or institutions if the latter are not carefully protected. This stance is shortsighted, noticed yet rarely discussed, and marked by the failure to understand that there are many churches but only one Kingdom.

⁵² Foster, *Whatever Happened to The Rich Young Man?*

Indeed, the initiation of a collaborative partner mission would involve various groups of people coming under one roof, with both Christians and secular professionals subsequently engaging in life activities together. In Chelmsford, this facility could be called “Unitas Life Center”: the third place, as it were, for training and caring for the homeless and the spiritual poor. Such a mission would provide free services to the homeless community, such as a salon, where they could be showered with love and could reclaim their dignity on the streets. In addition, lawyers offering pro bono advice to immigrants and thus keeping their families together, mental health practitioners lending a listening ear to every community, and tutors teaching English as a second language for those in need, all these experts can offer their services through this facility. Ideally, such a project would continue to develop in the Chelmsford and Lowell areas, feeding people physically and, more importantly, spiritually, all under one roof. In summary, churches and ministries must seek to create productive partnerships in expanding the Kingdom of God.

A unique aspect of these partnerships is the involvement of the spatialized affluent, especially the younger generations who claim that they are bored and unfulfilled.⁵³ Connecting with the Life Center could arouse in them a passion for the materially and spiritually impoverished, make them realize their own good fortunes, and lead them to discover that helping others is a commitment that is fruitful and worthwhile. Encouraging the spatialized affluent to get involved with Unitas Life Center and utilizing their expertise or finances would lead to the genesis of their lasting relationship with the church and the homeless. Therefore, this research proposes the establishment of a network between local businesspeople, government departments, and existing

⁵³ Madeline Levine, *The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids* (New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2007), 6, <http://toronto.lib.overdrive.com/ContentDetails.htm?ID=7E458154-5790-4776-A17A-0F0B94750EEB>.

Christian ministries in the Chelmsford area, such as Life Connections, Dream Center in Lawrence, Young Life, Intervarsity, and Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship.

Specifically, internalizing the armed forces' no-man-left-behind attitude in their search for the lost and the wounded, Unitas should develop a team of highly trained and committed Street Pastors who will operate in the nighttime economy, connecting with partygoers outside nightclubs, lending a listening ear to all, reaching places where others would not venture and bringing hope to the homeless and street workers. Unitas should also use more hands-on avenues of outreach and succor, such as a double-decker red bus as its mobile home station, which will distribute sandwiches or drinks and serve as a temporary oasis for the needy. On the top deck of the bus, prayer pastors can gather and pray for people, while the oasis downstairs can be a place of spiritual and physical nourishment.

In this vein, this research explores what I call a Popeye theology: "I can't take this anymore." For any weary follower of Jesus who asks, "Why am I here, and what can I do?", this project in Chelmsford could offer an immediate and unique opportunity, inviting him/her to disseminate the fragrance of God and bring churches together to help and unite his/her entire populace.

Impact of Jesus Christ

Jesus had the option of living among the affluent, but he chose to always show humility and compassion for the poor and the spiritually lost. He was anointed to preach the Good News to the impoverished and afflicted, and he reassured them that their anguish would soon be over. Thus, the employment of humble individuals as selected instruments of God's will demonstrate God's endless care for the less fortunate.

The Psalmists spent a substantial amount of time articulating a God who helps the impoverished in their time of need. Many prayers for the poor are presented throughout Psalms, with the Psalmists promising the needy that the Lord would hear their pleas once they spoke to Him (Ps. 34). Similarly, the poor today are told to be fearless since God is always with them, and they will soon be saved from their predicament. Thus, they realize that God has compassion for the impoverished and respects them as much as He loves the fortunate. The needy are also promised a better life away from the dunghill, assured about impending feasts with the princes.

God showed enormous compassion by allowing Jesus to suffer on the cross to rescue humanity, revealing his inexhaustible care for the impoverished. In turn, God's offspring must mirror His nature by championing the cause of the poor. Thus, the church must engage in holistic ministry by expressing the very character of God, who stands for the dispossessed, feeds the hungry, sets spiritual prisoners free, provides sight to the blind, supports those who have lost hope, loves the righteous, watches over the universe, condoles the fatherless and the bereaved, but is also infuriated at watching the wicked ways of some. Dave Smith encapsulates God's character succinctly: 'Don't put me in a box. You've known me as a God of Great power, of signs and wonders, but in your state of depletion, I want to reveal myself to you in a different way.'⁵⁴ Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that the church will fail to influence the masses if it addresses their spiritual needs while ignoring all other human desires.

A church seeking to positive admiration in the twenty-first century should rethink its approach to service. It must employ an acceptable strategy that considers the mercurial myriad of people's requirements. According to the Bible, Jesus was concerned with meeting both spiritual and material human needs: He wanted to feed the hungry, free the imprisoned from the grip of

⁵⁴ Dave Smith, *God's Plan for your Wellbeing* (Farnham, Surrey: Waverley Abbey Resources, 2020).

wickedness, and heal the sick. They all observed the Sabbath but had no idea what it meant.

However, Jesus also opposed excessive devotion to worldly aims in the absence of a thorough understanding of life and the everlasting nature of the soul.

Poverty in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, physical and spiritual escape, with regard to the Israelites' escape from Egypt, are inextricably linked. In that story of liberation, God's people learned the need to strengthen one another, especially after witnessing how He delivered them from Egypt. They felt that if they followed God's word, they would thrive; helping the poor meant complying with and fulfilling one of His mandates. God wanted those deprived souls to flourish. Thus, recurrent poverty contradicts the merciful God's will. However, to thank God for His mercy and deliverance, the free Israelites were expected to act justly in life. Thus, freedom begets emancipation: it must not only be gained but also be granted by the same people. Because it is a component of justice and because justice is irreducible, emancipation cannot involve a division between those who receive it and those who grant it. It must unify everyone in both positions; otherwise, it is not just emancipation.

Today, people may not be in the same state of slavery as the Israelites in Egypt, but the church is still responsible for rescuing the oppressed regardless of the level of their suffering. The church must ensure that all people live in harmony with one another. God's people are responsible for releasing their fellow humans from oppression and spiritual privation.

When the Israelites arrived in the Promised Land, they were given strict orders to limit the abuse of the impoverished. Property was to be dispersed equitably based on the population size, theft and covetousness were forbidden, bribery was discouraged, and the firstborn had the right of inheritance. There was a judicial impartiality between the poor and the wealthy. The Lord was said

to be the sole owner of land and property, and to avoid embarrassment and tyranny, His regulators controlled people's property. As an example of the Israelites' sincerity and concern for the impoverished, anybody who refused the poor the right to collect the gleanings was considered a robber of the poor. As previously said, the poor could just head out to the fields to obtain food for sustenance.

The Jubilee Year

The institution of Jubilee demonstrates how important God considered fundamental equality of opportunity. It also signifies that all members of the Israelite community had fair chances to access the fruits of the land and that a property was meant to be restored to its rightful owner. God intended for all individuals to be equal and wanted to prevent excessive poverty and prosperity; thus, He enforced a cultural, environmental, and economic reset. The restitution of land ensured that nobody would lose their property, an aspect that also encapsulated the opportunity for a "faith reset."⁵⁵ To save the rightful owners of property from falling into poverty, God mandated the return of rented land. His rules were established in a land where no one was more exceptional than others. Because God's people knew that all their property ultimately belonged to the Lord, they made sure to not insult their creator. Indeed, these land limits were enforced not to diminish basic humanity but to safeguard the vulnerable from abuse by the wealthy. Those who farmed the land were only missionaries passing through as outsiders. God, as the universal landlord, permitted them to enjoy the splendor and fruits of the world while reminding them that they were merely His stewards. Even though God's people could purchase and sell goods, their trade had to be clean and honest. They were to show their respect for the Lord by not taking advantage of one another and preventing

⁵⁵ Melody Murton, "Jubilee in the Bible," Tearfund Australia, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://www.tearfund.org.au/stories/jubilee-in-the-bible>.

tyranny. Thus, God's special love for the deprived ensured that all His children would be able to live decent lives.

Moreover, according to Leviticus (Lev 25), one must desire to assist those living in enforced poverty in breaking free from their bondage, since such an act generates divine delight. Hence, churches today are meant to be agents of hope. When they witness fellow humans sustaining themselves, they will finally thrive in a peaceful world. By highlighting the importance of caring for the poor, we as loving creatures of God must accept our God-given dignity and join Him in the adventure of improving the world.

In other words, God wants all of us to use our knowledge and skills to help the less fortunate achieve a quality of life worthy of their dignity by overcoming repression, depression, disease, hunger, and worthlessness. Walking with the needy indicates the goodwill of individuals who wish to preserve their God-given honor.

Further, as both the spiritual and social aspects of service are vital and intertwined in relation to poverty, today's churches should strike a balance between them. In the scriptures, social ministry and Christian testimony are inextricably linked⁵⁶ and have always coexisted without strife. Care for the less fortunate has been practiced since ancient times. In fact, the Great Commission, and the Commandment to love one's neighbor share the same meaning and should go hand-in-hand.⁵⁷ Also, while sharing the gospel, love for all comes first, because it is difficult to allow people to suffer when you genuinely love them. Thus, the Jubilee year helps to explain that God has always wanted people to live as a community, share what they have among themselves, and show love, respect, and allegiance to Him. Like the community of early Christians, the Israelites were

⁵⁶ Asres Bedaso and Bereket Duko, "Epidemiology of Depression among Displaced People: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Medical, PubMed Gov*, last modified 17 2022, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35316692/>.

⁵⁷ "Matt 22:37-39 (KJV)," n.d.

also a devoted community that worshiped and were purified by Him by following His laws and regarding each other with grace.

Aid to the Poor

Recently, Pope Francis has been asking people worldwide to use the millennium Jubilee to aid the poor for several coming years: “Everything one has is only a transitory gift from God. They flow through our life like a flute, blessings we are allowed to appreciate but never truly possess.”⁵⁸ Truly, the activities of the Jubilee years throughout history had a deeper meaning: they were intended to protect the institution of the family unit from destabilization. They also ensured that the covenant would be passed from generation to generation (Deut. 6). Also, with the sale of land being controlled thereon, the poor were impacted positively. Anyone who found it difficult to obtain land could, after the Jubilee year proclamations, extract more reasonable prices from creditors. Subsequently, the situationally poor could claim a farm space and earn an income via farming and related activities.

In this light, the impending Jubilee year should be utilized to ponder over methods to minister to the sick and possibly begin their road to restoration. God’s abundant resources must be urgently utilized to aid the economically and spiritually impoverished. In turn, the poor will love their lives and lead them as per God’s intentions after they are taught and assisted with income-generating and spiritually fulfilling initiatives. Regarding this move, the church should stand as a godsend, bringing liberty to the sick, hungry, oppressed, and lost.

One must also remember that the best type of assistance is one that produces long-term outcomes like self-sufficiency. Therefore, handouts and charity dependency should be avoided by

⁵⁸ Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*.

the church. Instead, every church should endeavor to empower people via development education and basic training in marketable skills, for instance. Such actions will indicate the church's objectivity and detailed planning regarding its assistance to the underprivileged. Thus, before launching any relief program, the church should conduct an extensive study on its efficacy and ask professionals to assist with the program's execution.

The Year of the Sabbath

According to scriptural knowledge, every Sabbath year, three things must be completed. First, the land is to be left fallow. The reason behind this is both environmental and humanitarian: upon prohibition of cultivation, the poor can get hold of whatever grows at the time. Thus, the limitation on developing the land is primarily motivated by God's regard for the impoverished. Second, all obligations are to be forgiven. Third, at the end the preceding year, all enslaved people are to be set free, and their lords must release them along with their belongings.⁵⁹

The objective of the Sabbath year is to keep injustice, oppression, and any form of chronic poverty from establishing their roots among God's people. With the sabbatical customs, God's intends to guarantee that everyone has enough to eat and thrive on. Indeed, support towards each other results in a munificent world, amounts to a reasonable exercise of lordship, and leads to the development of enduring relationships between God and his people.

Hence, Sabbath year serves as a striking reminder of God's compassion and desire for justice on behalf of the needy. God wants to witness the establishment of a just equality among all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic rank. If everyone can exercise equal rights, they will have easier access to the means and methods of production. They will also be able to cultivate their

⁵⁹ J. James and M. Morrison-Reed, *Voices from the Margins: An Anthology of Meditations*. (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2012).

professional skills and use them to provide for themselves and their families. Their excess capital can be sold to generate revenue and retain wealth, advancing the maintenance of peaceful and healthy community relationships.

The Poor and Jesus' Ministry

The four gospels of the New Testament include several episodes of Jesus Christ working for the impoverished. This section seeks to glean some of the gospels' lessons that might be integral to eradicating poverty in the twenty-first century.

The gospel of Mathew stressed that the Good News was intended for everyone. Thus, according to Mathew, the Good News was to be spread worldwide. The Commandment clearly describes the mission of the church. Moreover, the purpose of the Great Commission in Mathew is to minister to all facets of human life. Hence, one may legitimately claim that the Great Commission in Matthew corresponds to what the gospel represents and ushers in.⁶⁰

I argue that the Church and its surrounding society will benefit from explicit knowledge and application of the Great Commission. The Church must be reformed and become open to new types of ministries. More significantly, it must declare the truth of the gospels in their entirety. As Jesus reached individuals in their hour of need, so people will embrace the all-inclusive gospel in the precarious present. They only need to hear the truth about the God that created the earth, the God who desires their good and allows them to be effective stewards of His creation.

Once understood, the Great Commission can encompass every aspect of a fecund communitarian existence, especially empowering the poor into becoming the greatest mark of a progressive society. Some claim that the Great Commission is no longer as important as it was

⁶⁰ Bob Roberts, *Transformation: How Global Churches Transform Lives and the World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2009).

when Jesus first gave it to his disciples. However, a functioning church requires a clear awareness that the gospel is not always preached or studied in a Bible study; instead, it entails the development of sturdy methods to improve all lives. Thus, the Kingdom of God theme provides a good starting point for generating a Biblically grounded theology of the Christian mission, which is aimed at integrating evangelism with social concerns, in line with Jesus' goals.

The Kingdom of God

Jesus declared his land as God's Kingdom by healing its sick, casting out its demons, providing for its hungry, and raising its dead. Hence, without belief in the presence of God's Kingdom, no church can accomplish the Great Commission or comprehend its deeper mission.⁶¹ The church's mission must be an extension of Jesus' ambition, amounting to the expression, though incomplete, of God's Kingdom via preaching as well as social service. To continue Jesus' mission, the church must embark on social services as well as proclamations while waiting for his second coming.

Jesus proclaimed the Great Commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment, And...you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Mat 22:37-39). Obeying these commandments requires a clear sense of God's will, which in turn illustrates how to follow them in perfect harmony. Preaching was one of the conditions for completing the Great Commission, though more was anticipated. Thus, before God's message is spread, the poor and hungry, like Jesus, must be nourished. In addition to assistance with their urgent needs, the impoverished can also be instructed in establishing self-sustaining and revenue-generating initiatives.

⁶¹ Roberts, *Transformation*.

Serving the Lord with all our lives and loving our neighbor entails understanding ourselves and identifying with others in pain. How Jesus acknowledged and addressed the impoverished sends a powerful message to all subsequent believers. His story serves a call to reassess one's mindset and understand how the underprivileged should be treated. To empathize with the poor, one must experience their conditions, share their circumstances, and strive to comprehend and experience the intolerability of such plights. Preaching alone is insufficient; tangible deeds are necessary to support the Word of God. In fact, Jesus gave lectures at times, but he gave more heft to curing the sick, feeding the starved, and addressing people's material needs.

Although Jesus stated that there will always be impoverished people among us, this does not explain the church's inaction in combating poverty at present. Jesus unequivocally instructed that the fortunate should sell their possessions and donate the proceeds to the needy (Matt. 19:21). His invitation to sell individual possessions did not imply that people had to sell everything they owned: to avoid being a liability to others, people would still have to fulfil their own needs and provide for their families. Instead, Jesus urged individuals to share whatever they had with those in need. Hence, to is not enough to tell others about Jesus; our engagement in with his life is vital and must have a more significant influence on others. To that end, today's church should empower the deprived by providing them with skills and assisting them in developing successful ventures, initiatives, and ideas, encouraging diversified modes of thinking and meeting God in the world that can creatively improve impoverished lives.

Mark (5:21-43) portrays Jesus as both a healer and a raiser of the dead. Jesus aimed to assist people in their return to normalcy and harmony, and the Good News that he brought was to save and enhance vulnerable people's lives. Among other things, Jesus' aim in performing miracles was to influence the physical lives of the healed and delivered people, but he ultimately meant to

improve each individual entirely. Just as Jesus intended to reform the whole person, God's people and institutions today should endeavor to restore lost health, alleviate hunger, and abolish oppression.

The Gospel of Jesus

Jesus saw that his gospel wouldn't reach people's hearts unless their material necessities were met first. Similarly, the contemporary church must never overlook people's material needs and emulate Jesus' approach to service. More practical spirituality is also required to allow those suffering to experience a new moment of grace in which God invites them to embrace the spirituality that turns human pain into living hope. Everyone needs hope, especially the deprived, and the church must provide it.⁶² As Jesus commands in Matthew (28:19), the Church must be exhorted to confront the public with a Whole Gospel. Likewise, it is necessary for today's church to enter the worlds of leisure, economics, politics, as well as interpersonal connections and conflicts, to be agents of change and preach the true gospel.

Specifically, the church should put a stop to hurried arguments about the gospel. For those who regard the gospel as purely internal and personal, the mission of the Kingdom of God mission is limited to the salvation of their soul. Their God is far too insular to change the world. Others might interpret the gospel in materialistic and socialistic terms. For them, the effort to reform society is an end in itself.⁶³ Their God is too preoccupied to cure a broken heart. Instead, the Kingdom of God must be recognized as one in which He leads individuals into repentance; and when justice is ensured, the deep intimacy among all associated with the Kingdom can be found in human society.

⁶² James and Morrison-Reed, *Voices from the Margins*.

⁶³ Roberts, *Transformation*.

Jesus presented his idea of God's Kingdom to the impoverished as Good News. Thus, his Kingdom should be realized in the same world that He created. At present, the church's duty inside and outside of society should comprise the facilitation of redemption and participation in the liberation of the oppressed and needy. Also, such liberation must be followed by encouragement of self-sufficiency, such that the poor should subsequently be able to meet their fundamental needs. This way, today's church can be an agent of hope, implementing initiatives geared towards people's empowerment and allowing them to feel God's presence on earth.

The Poor in the Early Church

The Early Church offered care for those unable to sustain themselves. No property was personal, and whatever the Church owned was distributed among everyone. Moreover, the Early Church acted upon Jesus' teachings. By ensuring an atmosphere of sharing and support, the Early Church ensured that there was no poverty among the people. The same ethic of sharing was documented throughout the Torah: those who could not maintain themselves got assistance from those in power. Further, the entire community was bound to assist in meeting the requirements of every person. When numerous people repented on Pentecost, they all came together and shared their common pride and sorrow: giving to the less fortunate was the mandate of the day.

The kindness of people in the Early Church era came from the bottom of their hearts. For example, Barnabas sold a field he possessed to help the poor (Acts 4:37). In fact, sharing and trading property to aid the poor appears to have worked successfully in the time of the Early Church.⁶⁴ However, at present, such a strategy may sprout more difficulties than it solves. Indeed,

⁶⁴ Roberts, *Transformation*.

some people may choose to be slothful and take others' support for granted. Selling the property now may not be the best option; instead, the needy might be employed to work on the farms.

To avoid such a quagmire, we must remember that humankind was created primarily to praise and honor their creator. God wills everyone to know of his redeeming grace and be liberated from disobedience, despair, poverty, sickness, and everything else that could ruin the world. God's saving grace is intended to enable Christians to enter paradise after experience the pleasure of the Lord on earth.⁶⁵ It also encourages individuals to be positive and to live joyful lives. When individuals are enabled to achieve their basic requirements for life, both psychological and physical ones, their wholeness is restored.

The Early Church's activities and interactions demonstrate a cohesive community that intended to live as brethren and sisters. Its concomitant community experienced delight when enjoying their togetherness, and their connection enabled them to praise the Lord collectively, leading to a proliferation of His believers.

However, today most people attend church just for free meals, indicating that they have not really committed themselves to following the example of Jesus Christ. In this vein, one must note that while the Early Church's charity inspired more individuals to attend and embrace Jesus as their Lord and Savior, safeguards were also put in place to protect the Church against imposters; some academics refer to this information as the evangelical influence on modified economic connections.

To turn things around, today's church must preach both in and out of season. Plus, as the church is not an intimate association, it should seek new and effective ways of preaching the gospel. For instance, it must offer an ongoing testimony about the gospel's relevance to realities about humanity and God.

⁶⁵ James and Morrison-Reed, *Voices from the Margins*.

For this purpose, we must take inspiration from the existing accounts of the Early Church. For example, Jesus' early disciples demonstrated their compassion towards people in various ways: all of them offered the gift of health, Tabitha consistently accomplished good deeds and assisted the disadvantaged, while Paul cared deeply for the impoverished/sick and cured the exploited girl.

More significantly, Jesus' disciples passionately believed in his assertion that one is more fortunate to offer than to receive (Acts 20:35). Moreover, when it discovered that widows were being disregarded in food management, the church in Jerusalem sought to alleviate their plight to prevent a recurrence of abjection (Acts 6:1–2). Likewise, when there was a famine under Claudius' reign, the church intervened quickly: its assistance and aid to its needy brothers and sisters were of tremendous help. However, it is possible that such assistance was not given for extended periods. While they required food immediately, they would perhaps have preferred some training on how to gather their own food. Perhaps there were rivers where they could fish for familial and commercial purposes.

Therefore, the church today must realize that relief helps meet an acute need but is not a long-term solution to poverty. People must be guided towards emancipation through long-term solutions to their abjection instead of just benefitting from relief. Even though the Early Christian Church was a new reality, distinguished by its deep connection with God, its followers' oneness was attributed to the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Church was viewed as a sanctuary of salvation, and the primary mission of its gospel exalted the necessity sharing. However, for today's church "sharing" must be a temporary strategy. If other, more holistic measures to eradicate poverty are not implemented, many will pass as beggars and their reliance on others for well-being will remain unaddressed.

The Influence of Street Pastors

In above context of holistic measures for poverty eradication, one must talk about Street Pastors, U.K.'s largest charity founded by Black Christians, which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary with a special liturgy at Southwark Cathedral and a banquet at the Britannia Hotel. As Street Pastors has entered its 19th year of operation, several of its teams on the ground have spoken about their ministry, compiling some mind-boggling statistics that demonstrate the global effect of the Street Pastors project.⁶⁶

As the work of Street Pastors spreads and more churches become engaged with the charity, it will grow and impact many other locales. There is no lack of individuals who want assistance, care, or just a sympathetic ear, and thus Street Pastors have their work cut out.

As per ground reports, Street Pastors have been warmly accepted, and there are usually many vulnerable individuals who want to talk with and get assisted by them, but there is much more to be done. Nevertheless, it's amazing to share God's love right in the heart of London among tourists, visitors, commuters, and locals.⁶⁷ For Street Pastors in London, perhaps the most significant difference with those working in other areas is that their work must be done in public and quite populated sites, where at times they feel a dearth of their own. Going forward, those who reside outside of central London but want to patrol areas of the metropolis that rarely seem to sleep are encouraged to apply. All that is required is a kind heart, a recommendation from their pastor, and the will to go a few additional miles.

Undoubtedly, Street Pastors serve as a fantastic example of church unity and cooperation aimed at loving God, enjoying people, helping one's community, and impacting impoverished lives by bringing the light of God unto them.

⁶⁶ Isaac and Davies, *Faith on the Streets*.

⁶⁷ Isaac, *Street Pastors*.

Street Pastors – London Borough of Southwark

In Southwark, Street Pastors have been delighted to witness diverse denominations collaborating with the sole purpose of tangibly demonstrating the Lord's love. The Southwark community has reacted favorably to the Pastors' tactic of caring, listening, and assisting.⁶⁸ The range of people Street Pastors engage in the nighttime economy include an 18-year-old youth, unconscious and suffering from the frigid winter weather, or young women who are inebriated and are guided to avail of authorized cab services, or those who have missed their last bus or train home etc. Moreover, Street Pastors serve as peacemakers in hostile situations, along with correctly disposing off hundreds of containers and glasses.

Indeed, the work of this charity is a wonderful illustration of Jesus' ministry, where Jesus spent much of his time on the streets, embracing people rather than criticizing them. It is heartening to see Street Pastors putting their beliefs into positive action, since they are God's hands and feet. According to the Bible, God anointed Jesus Christ of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and divine power so that Jesus would spread His goodwill among people. Today, Street Pastors depict this beautiful story each day and night by emulating Jesus' service.

Towards Security

Security is not a goal but rather a pursuit that relates to a factual and subjective state of being. What security appears and feels like differs for every individual: people can feel safe even in danger and feel fear even in safety. Thus, security is a considerably more polysemic term than criminologists typically imagine. Furthermore, in reading Waldron's interpretation of Hobbes'

⁶⁸ Isaac and Davies, *Faith on the Streets*.

Leviathan, readers must not be misled by his equation of security with simple survival, because security is considered to imply an essential public good that connotes pleasure and welfare.⁶⁹

Hence, we must be open to the idea that security is something we all supply collectively. Evidently, security is a result of many social processes.⁷⁰

In a broader sense, people also work together to safeguard their ways of life and interaction patterns that constitute their sense of security. This research, thus, argues that we must offer security to each other by participating in the social order of behaviors and engagement that characterizes our ways of life, and we should work in sympathy with others to guarantee that the advantages of our societal systems are accessible to all. In this regard, this study will evaluate the Street Pastors' code of conduct.

Street Pastors' Code of Conduct

1) Code of Conduct for Street Pastors

a) This Code of Conduct establishes the personal and organizational standards that must be maintained by all Street Pastors personnel, volunteers, and charity boards as they perform their work and ministry concerning the Street Pastors charity. This code is included in the Street Pastors' Licensing Agreement, their Volunteers' Agreement, and all their employment contracts.

b) It is critical that all those associated with the Street Pastors movement always follow this Code of Conduct, to provide a high level of service to those whom they assist and maintain their reputation as part of a professional organization with high standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability.

⁶⁹ Amanda Ferguson and Dori Starnes, "Leviathan," Education, *Study.Com*, last modified 2022, accessed October 18, 2022, <https://study.com/learn/lesson/leviathan-thomas-hobbes-summary-quotes-analysis.html>.

⁷⁰ Nick Johns, Greta Squire, and Adrian Barton, *Street Pastors: From Crime Prevention to Re-Moralisation*, vol. Panel Paper (Presented at the British Criminology Conference, Brighton: British Society of Criminology, 2009), 56, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://www.britisocrim.org/volume9/3.Johns09.pdf>

2) The Ethos of Street Pastors

First and foremost, Street Pastors must not voice opinions, use language, or exhibit any traits that people may find offensive.

- a) Street Pastors be respectful towards people they deal with, stakeholders they interact with, individuals whom they assist, and the broader public. They must respect and accommodate variances in tradition, culture, and religion as much as possible while providing their services.
- b) Accountability and transparency on part of the Street Pastors are also necessary for their work to bear the desired results.
- c) Street Pastors work for their regional Street Pastors charity and must follow the Street Pastors' License Agreement and any concomitant regulations and procedures. All acceptable directions from their local supervisors, coordinators, and charitable trustees must also be followed by the Street Pastors staff and volunteers.
- d) Street Pastors must always reveal any private interests that may conflict with their duties and address such disputes to safeguard Ascension Trust's and the Street Pastors movement's values and principles.

3) Wearing Uniforms

- a) On duty, Street Pastors must wear only Ascension Trust Street Pastor clothing/headwear.
- b) Street Pastors should carry an authorized and valid ID Card while on duty.
- c) No member of the Street Pastors charity, from trustees and staff to volunteers, must wear or carry their uniform and/or ID card at any time other than when they are on duty or are taking part in an officially organized event promoting the charity.

4) Press, Radio, and Television

a) All Street Pastors staff, volunteers, and trustees should adhere strictly to the Street Pastors' Media Policy. If any media professional contacts a charity trustee, staff, or volunteer on an issue that has actual or potential implications for Street Pastors at national or international levels, all such queries or requests must be redirected to Ascension Trust.

If the given issue/request is exclusively relevant to a local Street Pastors charity, it must be forwarded to one of its regional coordinators, who can discuss the same with one or more of the local charity trustees. When in doubt, Street Pastors must seek advice from Ascension Trust.

5) Gifts

a) Other than small advertising items, a Street Pastor shall not receive any personal gifts, monetary or otherwise. Donations to Ascension Trust and the local Street Pastors charity should be submitted and documented by a coordinator. When in doubt, Street Pastors must speak with supervisors or local coordinators.

6) Hospitality

a) It is understood that charity trustees, workers, or volunteers may occasionally provide and/or receive meals and drinks from others. However, any hospitality expenditures should be limited to an acceptable level. After consulting with their charity trustees, each local coordinator should determine what kind of hospitality is fair/permissible. If costs exceed the agreed-upon threshold, they should be examined by a local coordinator, who, upon approval, should record the same in a logbook.

7) Workplace Integrity

a) Street Pastors should always strive to maintain the most significant levels of integrity. In situations of maladministration, or when it is suspected that the law is being breached or the

authenticity of the Street Pastor brand is being jeopardized, a letter of concern in an envelope marked Private and Confidential should be sent to the trustees of Ascension Trust.

b) This facility should be utilized only when a clear case of unlawful conduct is performed or a significant threat to the Street Pastors brand is identified, and when repeated attempts to remedy such an problem, following the ordinary chain of responsibility, have failed. This facility must only be used for whistleblowing and nothing else.

8) Maintaining Confidentiality

a) Street Pastors should appreciate operational transparency, but they should also be aware of situations in which strict secrecy is essential.

b) Street Pastors shall abide by the U.K. government's Data Protection Act 1998⁷¹ and follow the processes designed to preserve the confidentiality of information regarding charity trustees, workers, volunteers, benefactors, and other shareholders.

c) Street Pastors must not divulge or induce any unauthorized person into revealing personal information concerning Ascension Trust, Street Pastors, or people participating in ministry, e.g. private addresses, phone numbers, wages, and contract conditions.

d) Street Pastors should only disclose information in the presence of a third party as required by law, e.g., when clients pose a risk to themselves or are in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If in doubt, they must contact their local coordinator.⁷²

⁷¹ U.K. Government, "Data Protection Act 1998." Government. Legislation UK. Accessed October 18, 2022. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>.

⁷² Les Isaac, *Street Pastors* (Eastbourne, UK: Kings Communications, 2009), 5.

The Model of Street Pastors

As an institution, the church's principal mission is to foster social justice and inform people about divine justice. Its fundamental goal is not only to encourage humanity to be fairer but to also inform people about God's righteousness through the legends of Jesus Christ.⁷³ As a people-centered institution, the church should naturally care for the people in the community from whom it derives its membership. Notably, such a social obligation must be carried out covertly and discretely, with love and concern for others.

In this light, Chelmsford's NewSong Community Church is more than just a location where Christians gather on Sundays. It is a proactive Christian ministry that should influence the lives of people everyone living in this area. This is because it aims to enact the gospel's message via words and deeds. NewSong should stand against avoidable socioeconomic poverty instead of advocating specific social measures to alleviate poverty. It may describe broad social policy aims/purposes without generally endorsing policy initiatives.

The gospel is an organism comprising the community and fellowship of its believers. It varies from the institutional church in that it refers to the church as a collection of diverse believers rather than a coherent entity. Of course, each Christian is a personal actor in this aggregate. Under God's design, every Christian has a role and a calling in the world, a vocation, whether that of a plumber or a politician. However, the distinction between the gospel and the church depicts a contrast between pastoral work, that a Street Pastor performs as an agent of his/her church, and kingdom work, which a Christian performs in service to his Lord but not as His instrument, like Street Pastors.

⁷³ Les Isaac and Davies Rosalind, *Faith on the Streets*, Christians in action through the street Pastors movement

Christians can feed the hungry, console the bereaved, and visit the sick. Christian plumbers carefully plumb their Kingdom ministry such that there are no leaks in their Kingdom. Christian instructors teach with the solid hope that although we now wallow in the dark, one day we shall face the light, and then there will be no ignorance in us.

The mission of Street Pastors, on the other hand, is to serve as a comforting presence in their local communities. Thus, they should demonstrate their compassion and love for others in concrete ways. Individual Street Pastors must listen to and converse with people in their neighborhoods, provide information about local organizations, aid, and important resources, and prevent anti-social behavior in the streets. As religious volunteers, they must help the needy especially in the nighttime economy, supplying security via empathy and compassion.

Aware of God's Word, the church today is uniquely positioned to discern what is morally permitted and what is forbidden. Thus, it should speak out against the obvious moral inequities of the day. However, at least in the Western world, most political disputes are contests between two or three morally defensible policy alternatives. Choosing between such possibilities necessitates a type of worldly intelligence to which Christians have no particular claim.

Starting a Non-Profit Organization

To make Street Pastors' interventions as effective in its locale as they are in U.K., NewSong must act as a non-profit organization that serves the various needs of the larger community with whom it engages. Therefore, it must conduct a survey on the specific needs of the Chelmsford and Lowell locals that it should address. This information can be acquired through the questionnaire given in Appendix A. There are ten steps that must be followed in starting such a non-profit organization, as shown below:

- a. Naming of the nonprofit organization
- b. Application for exemption from Federal Tax (**FEIN**)
- c. Creation of a bank account
- d. Acquisition of insurance
- e. Appointment of a registered agent
- f. Selection of the board members and officers
- g. Acquisition of articles of the Association

CHAPTER FOUR

Proposed Solution and Methodology: Doing Small Things with “Great Love”

Quantitative Methodology

In this research, a quantitative approach was used to capture relevant information: a two-week congregational survey⁷⁴ was completed by the members of NewSong Community Church, Chelmsford, modeled after surveys presented by Ammerman et al.⁷⁵ This church could be described as meeting place of both the marginalized (lower income) and the spatialized affluent (higher income) classes of the Chelmsford area. Its purpose is to reveal ecclesial life's fiscal and spiritual aspects concerning people's relationship with God, facets that are intrinsic to a missionary life in Christian communities.

Qualitative Methodology

Beyond these above quantitative assessments of NewSong congregation and its relationship to the larger community in Chelmsford, interviews (as a qualitative approach) were conducted by this research to probe more deeply into the needs Chelmsford's various social strata. Through these interviews, this research gained invaluable insights into the strategies that could help NewSong sustain a positive footprint in Chelmsford's local communities.

Interviews

During this research, I visited and interviewed the following subjects:

- Officials of Moses Project, Stockton, U.K., a charity providing guidance, mentorship, and support to adult males with past and/or current addictions to drugs and alcohol.

⁷⁴ See Appendices A and B.

⁷⁵ Nancy T. Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1998).

- Dr. Gladys Ganiel, Professor of sociology, Queens University Belfast, Northern Ireland, who wants to build a church beyond walls.
- SOS Bus Belfast, Northern Ireland, which is a secular nonprofit organization based in West Belfast, whose workers come from both sides of the primary Christian sectarian divide; our discussions focused on the connection between SOS' street activity and the logic animating the same;⁷⁶
- Six vital public figures in the City of Lowell government departments, business leaders, and church/ministry leaders, to ask how they all view their communities through the lens of leadership and how they see the role and effectiveness of community in poverty eradication.
- Members of my church who reside in Westford and Lowell, Massachusetts; these ethnographic interviews provided insights into diverse roles of various people within the broader community, e.g., a former sex worker and current nurse practitioner.
- Joel Miller, (a former addict, now a leader who manages Recovery Café), who provided first-hand experience of being an addict and sleeping on the streets.
- Jeff Watson of Out of Darkness Ministries, a practitioner who works with drug addicts and the homeless.⁷⁷
- The Lawrence Dream Center, which works with its community and provides its populace a Third Place, a neutral space where the spatialized affluent and marginalized poor can connect and grow together.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ "SOS NI," Non-profit, *SOS NI HERE TO HELP*, last modified 2021, accessed October 18, 2022, <https://www.sosbusni.com>.

⁷⁷ "Called out of Darkness Ministry" *Called out of Darkness*. Last modified July 9, 2022, <https://www.calledoutofdarkness.one/home#team>.

⁷⁸ "Merrimack Valley Dream Center," Merrimack Valley Dream Center, accessed October 10, 2022, mvdreamcenter.org.

Moreover, I visited and participated in a two-day training session with the Street Pastors outfit in Bangor, Maine. Further, as I was not able to arrange an in-person interview with Ascension Trust (Street Pastors HQ) in London, England, I held three zoom meetings with its leadership team to gain detailed knowledge and information on this unique ministry.⁷⁹

Interview Case Study #1: Moses Project,⁸⁰ Stockton, United Kingdom

Brian and Stella Jones served me on a Christian Coffee Bus that parks in the heavy-traffic areas of two major towns in Northern England on Friday and Saturday evenings. The nighttime economy was overflowing with alcohol and drug-consuming people, as Brian stated, “I did not want to get involved with ‘those people’.”

I interviewed Brian and Stella via Zoom on Sunday, October 18, 2020, and in person in July 2021. After their training through the Teen Challenge ministry,⁸¹ both Brian and Stella realized that in their area of work, many young adults had set forth on the wrong path, with no one to care for them, and in a desperate state, they had turned to drugs and alcohol. Thus, they passionately pledged their dedication to helping the lost and lonely: “Take away the addiction, deal with their hurt and pain which takes away their anger, and let beautiful butterflies emerge.”⁸² Brian and Stella shared that initially, the lost souls they approached did not want help, stole from their business during the day, and admitted their dislike for the two. Gradually, the two officials discovered that

⁷⁹ “Ascensiontrust.Org.Uk,” *Ascension Trust: Equipping to Serve*, accessed May 5, 2022, <https://www.ascensiontrust.org.uk>.

⁸⁰ Tad Web, “The Moses Project: Giving Guidance and Direction,” Christian Ministry, accessed October 10, 2022, <https://themosesproject.co.uk>.

⁸¹ “Teen Challenge UK,” Christian Ministry, *Freeing People from Addiction*, accessed October 17, 2022, www.teenchallenge.org.uk.

⁸² “In The Spotlight With Brian Jones From The Moses Project,” In *The Spotlight*, Tilly Bailey & Irvine Law Firm, last modified August 18, 2016, <https://www.tbilaw.co.uk/site/blog/in-the-spotlight/in-the-spotlight-with-brian-jones-from-the-moses-project>.

these deprived folks took drugs during the day, which became a way of life for them as they did not know any better.

Hence, Brian and Stella were encouraged to go on the Christian Coffee Bus, as the people from their church said it would change their lives, as they would get to pray for and with the lost souls. Indeed, using the Bus to interact with them, Brian and Stella found what lovely and precious people those addicts could be. God changed their hearts and gave them a passionate regard for these deprived people.

The Bus Ministry

The Bus Ministry is quirky: the front of such a bus is a coffee bar that attracts people, especially those who are drunk or high on drugs. Food is a good way to grab such people's attention; drugged people always get enticed by good food. As they sit and talk to the Bus Ministry volunteers, they begin to trust and confide in them. In fact, their trust must be earned, but the more they trust, the more they confide in the volunteers, indicating the salience of building relationships on the path to poverty eradication.

The average amount of people who come on or near the Bus ranges between 20–30, while around eight workers are usually present on the Bus, who talk to and serve these people. Upstairs, a team of intercessors pray for those who board the Bus and keep a ready supply of blankets, sleeping bags, and coats for those in need. Of course, the workers do not tolerate physical altercations: violent folks are asked to leave the Bus but welcomed back when they behave in a better way.

Bus Ministry in Massachusetts

A Bus Ministry, if set up in Massachusetts, will increase church involvement and ensure a synergy between various churches in the adjoining areas. This ministry should have well-trained and motivated young and older adults who can strive to strengthen community life and work for safer streets every day and night. Thus, the Bus Ministry can serve as a “mobile Third Place.”⁸³ The bus also will have a unique presence within the Chelmsford area, providing food, building relationships, and, most importantly, imparting faith among the masses.

Interview Case Study: #2 Lowell City Manager⁸⁴

After several months of running into closed doors and smokescreens, I was able to arrange a meeting with Nancy McGovern, Executive Assistant, Lowell City Manager’s Office, and Maura Fitzpatrick, Director of Homelessness Commission, Massachusetts. At least ten areas of concern were highlighted during our meeting. First, it was agreed that a street ministry would require a safe space to engage with individuals at night; the Recovery Cafe was considered as one such space, which currently remains unused in the evenings. Moreover, we gathered that religious and government agencies must work together to help those without a shelter. Moreover, we planned to embrace these individuals through our efforts, which would enable them to regain security, safety, and hope. Going forward, I plan to continue collaborating with governmental agencies that bring hope to those who seem to have none.

⁸³ Foster, *Whatever Happened to The Rich Young Man?*

⁸⁴ CivicPlus, “City of Lowell,” Local Government, CO-OP Team: *Fighting Addiction to Combat the Opiate Addiction*, accessed October 1, 2022, <https://www.lowellma.gov/1019/CO-OP-Team>.

During the meeting, I also suggested the possibility of opening a “dry pub” that offers respite, coffee, and a bite to eat for individuals who need food and an encouraging word. We agreed on “74 Middlesex St., Lowell” as a possible location for the same, as it has a building with over 5000 square feet of space and a 300-person capacity. In fact, this building may serve as an alternative to the Bus Ministry.

Further, it was emphasized that close collaboration and communication with Lowell’s Co-op Team are essential. To that end, it was decided that Ms. McGovern will obtain feedback from the Homelessness Initiatives Director and the City Manager in emulating the UK Street Pastors model with area-specific variances. Ms. McGovern would like to remain updated on the Street Pastors’ progress as they prepare for deployment in Lowell. Ms. Fitzpatrick has asked for further dialogue and has requested me to be a part of the Lowell’s Hunger and Homeless Commission.

Case Study #3: Zoom Meeting with Ascension Trust⁸⁵—Street Pastors HQ, London, England

As per my Zoom meeting with Street Pastors headquarters in London, the following are the requirements for a Street Pastor ministry in Massachusetts: 1) At least four different networks or denominations of churches willing to be involved and serve; 2) Identification of a Street Pastor Coordinator and some Senior Street Pastors; 3) Completion of the Street Pastor License Agreement; 4) Meetings with the Police and Local Government, which can work with NewSong to create an Urban Trinity; 5) Street Pastors’ training.

Attending two Training Sessions for Street Pastors in Maine

In these sessions, I obtained the following: 1) Churches coming together can positively influence people when they know that God’s people are out on the streets, building relationships; 2)

⁸⁵ Ascension Trust, “Ascension Trust: Equipping to Serve,” accessed May 5, 2022, <https://www.ascensiontrust.org.uk>.

Street presence gives the church credibility, rendering it accessible; 3) The church's mantra should be: "Sacredness and sanctity of human life facilitates growth and development of individuals to their fullest potential." 4) Hope can be imbibed through caring, listening, and helping; 5) A 20-second hug is an amazing outreach method, as it increases people's oxytocin level (even six-second hugs aid the flow of mood-boosting chemicals); 6) Good-quality interventions must build bridges: one must listen before preaching, Earn the right to introduce Jesus, and operate without prejudice; 7) A volunteer must be committed to a church for a year to show his/her passion for Jesus; 8) The church must have a spiritual vision towards people's well-being, help with resources, and expand its knowledge about its community and value its people; 9) The gospel must be embodied; 10) The larger community must be valued and honored, and we must spread the light of knowledge among people.

Belfast Street Pastors, Northern Ireland

I walked the streets of Belfast and observed its Street Pastors as part of this case study, contributing to a contrast between ideas of security and security governance. The city of Belfast is renowned as a "drinking city," and unfortunately, it has gained a reputation for sectarian violence fueled by drugs distributed by paramilitary groups; these factors made Belfast an ideal location for researching security challenges in the nighttime economy and its effects amongst younger generations. My experience was quite different from what I had anticipated. There were two teams that patrolled different areas of Belfast but stayed in constant communication with each other. We started at 9pm on a Saturday evening and finished at 4:30am the following Sunday morning.

A startling event occurred at the end of the evening: young people reported being picked pocketed and having their cellphones stolen. After the Street Pastors team that I was observing

communicated with several partygoers about the situation, the instances of theft stopped, and thereafter many young adults thanked the Street Pastors for keeping them safe. Moreover, I witnessed another alarming occurrence: there were several attempts at sex trafficking and kidnapping targeted at inebriated young people. I saw this attempted abduction in real-time; my team confronted the potential abductor, who subsequently fled. Thus, the communication between Street Pastors and the Police was effective, as the latter were able to provide the license numbers of the vehicles involved in sex trafficking.

Emergent Findings

Belfast Street Pastors: This experience prompted me to look at the possibility of introducing a patrol in rest stops in the Lowell area, where human trafficking occurs. We could use communication devices to inform the local police and the sheriff's department of any problematic incident, providing them with concomitant license details of wrongdoers.

Moses Project: Brian and Stella's wealth of information and experience provided deep insights into effectively ministering in the context of a Bus ministry, including practical help, motivation of volunteers, and ways of de-escalating potential cases of violence.

Lowell City Manager: Nancy McGovern's vision to see the town of Lowell continue in its transformation was inspiring. She gave Lowell's own Street Pastor ministry the permission to connect with governmental outreach initiatives, wanting secular and religious organizations to work together towards poverty eradication.

Ascension Trust: This program would need to adapt according to the differences in Massachusetts' culture, especially as there is a vast difference between the drinking culture in the United Kingdom and the homelessness and drug addiction in the Merrimack Valley.

The ministry thus formed should ensure that the surrounding homeless community is loved and helped, make the fragmented church to overcome traditional concerns and fears, and work in unity with other churches to usher in the Kingdom of God.

The Street Pastors' volunteer work combines spirituality, ethicality, and care, providing partygoers with safety and security and the associated ethos and values, much like the Olympics provides sporting opportunities and maintains an ethos of Olympism, embodying values like fair play and peacebuilding. In other words, encountering role models who can give without being asked may cause people to reconsider the world as different from a primarily self-centered Hobbesian battleground⁸⁶ and to alter their behavior accordingly. These are indeed the goals of numerous Street Pastors, who feel that their presence will encourage revelers to behave, refrain from fights, and avoid creating unsafe situations. On a deeper level, Street Pastors are prepared to put themselves in danger to bring the church to nightlife economies with their abiding faith. The logic of certitude, it appears, psychologically equips them to be self-confident, stay steadfast, and carry out their volunteer work.

Thus, the seemingly illogical features of Christianity have significant psychological benefits for Street Pastors. They perceive God as a safe foundation that provides them the fortitude to immerse themselves in often unpleasant, alcohol-laced nightlife atmosphere. With God in their hearts, they gain the bravery and inspiration to care about others, despite humans' natural tendency to behave in the opposite way. This way, they transform certitude into a vehicle for a positive

⁸⁶ Brianna Sargent, "The Hobbesian State of Nature Among Nations" Academic Paper, Ashland University, 2019, accessed September 1, 2022, https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=auhonors1556751283322051&disposition=inline.

attitude towards security. The truth of God activates a coping strategy that encourages Street Pastors to build networks of community, solidarity, and care in a nighttime context dominated by neoliberal cultural politics.

Public Policy and Religion

Public policy and religion have had a profound influence on the evolution of public policies in the United Kingdom, perhaps most notably on the profession of social work; one of the primary attendant difficulties is the perception that Christianity has a history of bigotry and tyranny, which contradicts public welfare objectives. It may even be argued that the advent of the postwar welfare state reduced the necessity for direct church engagement.⁸⁷

The Vision

Still, nobody imagined that the church would expand like it has and be able to do so much for the people. Indeed, the purpose of the church was to praise God by doing a modest service to repair the possible damage it has previously caused. In fact, many churches in U.S.A are seeing extremely modest growth or even decline. Several variables are responsible for this systemic condition: a maintenance-oriented mindset that prioritizes the upkeep of church activities and buildings; pastoral reliance, which restricts laity members' engagement and increases their indifference and carelessness regarding those missing from the community surrounding the church.

A congregation's vision is not the same as its mission statement. Though a mission statement is helpful, the church's true mission is delineated in the scriptures, and while it may be phrased in various ways, it should generally be the same across communities and congregations. On

the other hand, a vision is a descriptive depiction of the church's future. It depicts how things might look if the church stays true its purpose. The congregation creates strategies to support this destiny after defining it.

If the church lacks such a vision, its community cannot choose between several great prospects, which limits its influence and success. Therefore, there is a critical need for churches to comprehend how and by whom this goal and direction must be defined: the purpose here is to pinpoint the origin of the vision and understand the appropriate source of its genesis for the benefit of pastors and congregations.

Visioning appears to be a consensual process in current standard practices, and thus the church and its pastors expect the vision to emerge naturally through joint planning. However, the vision seldom manifests itself in a discernible manner. Congregational leaders may notice a related trend or a direction over time, but it is often not well-formed or outlined. Indeed, there is a significant distinction between churches with a vision and organizations without it. Those who lack vision appear to be preoccupied with programmatic aspects of a strategy and facility upkeep. However, those with vision yearn for more:⁸⁸ experiments with new ideas, and production of new avenues towards the Kingdom of God rather than borrowing. Churches with vision appear to be more concerned with making a real difference than simply surviving.

Identifying a leader's role in developing a vision might pave the road for a congregation to realize its full potential. I believe our pastors and congregational leaders in Massachusetts are committed to nurturing a vision towards poverty eradication.

One may think that the church has always understood what it means to be guided by values and vision, but that has not necessarily been the case. In fact, the resurrection of creative leadership

⁸⁸ 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, Mich: Baker Books, 2002).

in the commercial world has reawakened the church into realizing the necessity of a robust vision: business executives have discovered that pressure, manipulation, or authoritarian control fail to provide leadership to vast groups of people in who work in their companies, and that individuals respond best to organizations that provide meaning and direction to their lives.⁸⁹

Hence, whatever the leaders of street pastors hope to achieve, they will need the force of a vision to make it a reality in the minds of their followers. At least three leadership concepts should be at work with respect to leading people with vision: hopes, dreams, and ambitions.⁹⁰ These emotions can fuel the church's ambition to accomplish great things. Christian pastors may face difficult obstacles, yet these leaders can find ways to show hope and exhibit confidence in God's unfolding plan. Establishing a clear, appealing vision will drive their efforts and keep them on track. In other words, a vision can support them through difficult times by informing them of the reasons behind their work.

Disagreements in the church might also arise regarding ministry practice or programming objectives. However, a vision can assist the church in growing above these challenges and towards a more significant objective. When a congregation sees a clear image of a future deserving of their effort, it can set aside its little difficulties. People with a compelling vision can speak of the future with desire and passion in their voices. In the severest of situations, a clear vision can offer people hope for better days. Also, when a congregation discovers a shared vision under the direction of a trusted leader, it can make enormous personal sacrifices to assist him/her in turning the vision into a reality. Thus, church leaders must gauge the present possibilities and create a suitable environment for members to participate in unfolding, refining, and expressing their vision together. Even the

⁸⁹ Foster, *Whatever Happened to The Rich Young Man?*

⁹⁰ James C. Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make a Leap...And Others Doner* (New York: HarperCollins eBooks, 2001), EPUB Edition.

scriptures state that without a vision, God's people will perish (Prov 28:18). Only then will a distinctive and exciting shared vision emerge. Insight has no force, strength, or influence until it extends from the visual to the real. Hence, from any organizational standpoint, a vision must be conveyed to influence others into sharing and striving for it.

Leadership necessitates.

While the corporate sector is motivated to establish a shared vision geared towards revenue and productivity, church leadership should be able to generate far greater enthusiasm because it is concerned with transforming people now and preserving their goodwill for eternity. Our purpose could hardly be more crucial: it is divinely inspired! We have every incentive to be visionary as church leaders. We are also likely concerned about the repercussions of casting aside a dream that may be difficult to realize. We must remember that leadership necessitates stepping outside our comfort zone for worthwhile causes and challenging others to do the same.

Undoubtedly, the Bible is the most justified of all causes. Our churches should improve such that its shared vision can bring us closer to the Kingdom of God. In fact, church leaders are conscious of the concomitant costs but are also prepared to take risks to realize this far more valuable goal. In this light, Scott Sauls states, "Being a pastor visionary demands visionaries, individuals who have permitted their minds and souls to roam outside the artificial limitations imposed by the universe as it is."⁹¹ A vision, thereafter, must arouse the brave into making it a reality.

⁹¹ Scott Sauls, *From Weakness to STRENGTH: 8 Vulnerabilities That Can Bring Out the Best in Your Leadership* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, n.d.).

The Call of God to Serve

The notion of visionary leadership did not originate at Harvard Business School or on Wall Street. Throughout history, God has called on His people to embrace the visionary messages He has produced and supplied to His anointed leaders. Thus, expecting a leader to lead with vision is not a novel attitude.

Many accounts in the Bible depict God sending human leaders with a unique vision to perform daring deeds for Him: his visions guided Moses, Nehemiah, Philip, Peter, and many others in significant ways. It is impossible to locate a passage in the scriptures where significant actions for God or His people were performed without naming a chosen person or without someone being summoned by God to assume the lead. Typically, the chosen individual was provided a detailed vision to assist them in capturing the essence of their assignment.

For instance, Abraham was informed that his offspring would outnumber the stars in the sky. From a flaming bush, God informed Moses that He had descended to save people from the hands of the Egyptians and to deliver them out of that land into a pleasant and spacious place flowing with honey and milk. According to Matthew, Jesus came across two fishermen, Simon, (whom Jesus named Peter) and his sibling Andrew. He appeared in one of their visions, saying, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19).

All these men were prepared to give up everything to follow God’s goal and inspire others to do the same. However, there is no reference in the Bible to leaders seeking vision due to communal choices. Instead, God’s vision is made available to anybody with whom He decides to communicate. Whenever a person receives a vision from God, he/she responsible for leading people towards the same.

The Mission of God

Before he left his apostles to embark on his mission, Jesus told them about his plans for each of them. In fact, more than just plans, Jesus gave them his visions. He declared in Acts 1 that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit descended on them, and they would be his ambassadors in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and every corner of the world. A comparable depiction of the vision and goal imparted to his disciples may be found in Matthew (28:19, 20). These two portrayals of Jesus' vision have inspired millions of Christian followers to go and seek out disciples in all countries of the world. Therefore, these two verses convey God's goal for the church today: He exhorts churches to gain a clear perspective of how His vision should manifest itself in every culture and location. Today, God wants His leaders to guide His people towards His Kingdom.

The Origins of Street Vision

The business industry may have a myriad of visions for humanity's future, but the true vision finally comes from God, according to Mancini: "God may use the help of others to accomplish and express His intentions, but He is the creator of the church's mission and destiny."⁹² Leading congregational changes reminds us that for the goal to inspire our congregations should first and foremost emerge from God's heart. We might seek it and accept it; however, it is only given to us by God. Each believer must heed God's plan for his/her life.

However, the church is not a whole person. Because it exists as a community of believers, it is, by definition, an institution that requires leaders. The first input regarding missionary activities may originate from a visionary group or the entire congregation, but they are more often produced by an individual rather than a group, generally prepared by a senior pastor.

⁹² Will Mancini, *Church Unique: How Missional Leader Cast Vision, Capture Culture, And Create Movement* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008).

Even those who consider visioning as a process involving a large and formal assembly to discuss individual perspectives recognize the critical role of a leader in facilitating this process. In this light, a pastor is the leader of the local church, having been selected both by God in his vocation and by the church through a committee. Because management and vision are so inextricably linked, pastors should always seek purity of vision to serve as able leaders.

The Role of the Leader

The pastor is accountable for seeking, discerning, and communicating God's vision. Thus, he/she must first seek God's guidance. (Matt 6:33). Here, if the pastor gets ahead of God, he/she may unknowingly offer his/her personal goal instead of realizing God's plan. Hence, the pastor must approach this phase with humility to obtain confirmation that God is the origin of his/her vision.⁹³ The conviction will be required afterwards, when pastors defend their vision fearlessly.

To that end, many traditional spiritual disciplines, like prayer, Bible study, solitude, fasting, and meditation, might put the pastor in a good position to hear God's purposes. The pastor must listen to people's needs, become acquainted with the neighborhood surrounding the church, and discuss his/her principles and fundamental beliefs with church members. Praying about the issues he/she notices and seeking God to explain His answer to the same are critical with regard to realizing God's vision. The pastor can be assured that God will disclose a need and a purpose in response to this encounter. In differentiating such leadership from a secular corporate viewpoint, I hereby emphasize the significance of an introspective search of one's soul for God's vision.

Discovering one's vision, like discovering one's voice, is a journey of self-discovery and self-creation. It is an emotional and intuitive process. When describing the personalization of God's

⁹³ Robert James Kauffelt, "How The Church Has Lost Its Vision, A Biblical Model To Regain Its Mission," Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, last modified November 2021, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/58824397.pdf>.

vision, church leaders must first appraise the vision, getting so moved by it that they can subsequently inspire others. The next step is for leaders to accept responsibility for their vision; where the church is in good health, the pastor must recognize God's vision for his/her congregation. Moreover, a vision can also be obtained by examining the vocational direction expressed by the blessedness and enthusiasm of church members. In such instances, the pastor's duty as a leader requires him/her to clearly articulate the vision that he/she has discovered in the congregation's collective mind.

Developing a Shared Vision

Even the most inspired and sincerely sought vision will be meaningless unless the pastor approaches the congregation with an outlined procedure for the adoption of their vision. A self-motivated vision cannot be imposed on others: a vision must be meaningful to a pastor's constituents as well. Transforming a vision into a collective vision involves more than simply conveying the idea in a monologue; it necessitates extensive dialogue. A vision is not genuinely shared until it resonates in everyone's hearts. Personal visions can collectively give rise to shared visions founded on collectively agreed beliefs, priorities, and objectives. Therefore, genuine concern for a common goal must first be anchored in personal visions. Then, the participatory vision exchange becomes a crucial phase where people can truly demonstrate their faith in the New Testament, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all believers.

After the pastor prays for and seeks God for His initial vision, he/she must shepherd his/her folks by departing from a personal vision to facilitate a collective vision. This might entail guiding a core group of community leaders through a process of discovery of personal visions and God's

purpose in individual lives.⁹⁴ Thereafter, this procedure may be extended to the entire congregation, a process which might take some time. To acquire the members' confidence and hear them share their true feelings, a pastor must be patient and show genuine concerns for his/her folks.

Undoubtedly, it is challenging to depart from the pastor's personal knowledge of God's vision to a shared vision for an entire congregation.

A Street Pastor is part of a team that works together in prayer and action to aid individuals out on the night economy, either behind the scenes as a praying pastor or praying over the city or out on the street as a public Street Pastor hearing and caring for individuals, and they meet on the street. A Street Pastor is a member of the Christian community who is prepared to care, listen, and assist individuals who have been disenfranchised or marginalized by society. In this regard, a Street Pastor must be prepared to engage with individuals nonjudgmentally and openly, regardless of their personal views. His/her role is to get to know individuals in the neighborhood and form connections to learn about their needs and provide aid or counsel. Thus, Street Pastors must establish community credibility so that the surrounding community realized that the Church is there to help them. They must take time to converse and listen to those who are lonely, anxious, or depressed, so that their concerns are taken as genuine. Prayer pastors must also help communities engage in prayer and supplication.

Evaluation

The primary reason for delving into Street Pastors' operations, is to theorize on what a Christian influence can entail for secular society. This reason is based on two assumptions. First, individual ethics and religious beliefs influence how people identify their actions and how they

⁹⁴ Kenneth Hagin, *I Believe in Visions* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1972).

affect others. Second, belief and conviction have significant beneficial effects on society, and a leap of faith can have immensely positive consequences regarding compassion, charity, and succor. The main reason this research focuses on Street Pastors is that they act as embodiments of God's compassion and love.

Street Pastors play a strategic role in addressing a more significant issue: the neglect of favorable opinions on public security governance in the nighttime economy. They bring into question popularly held notions about nightlife, primarily concerning public inebriation, violence, and the expulsion of undesirable elements from this economy. Street Pastors educate people about the fact that alternate worlds of friendship and confidence still exist in a culture used to drinking places and the easy solutions of law enforcement. However, in Lowell and Chelmsford, finding an alternative to Street Pastors is almost impossible.

The experience of Street Pastors in the two abovementioned cities demonstrates that financial poverty is not the same as spiritual poverty: one's wealth does not correspond to his/her spiritual well-being. These pastors help those who live on the margins of society: the foreigner, the spatialized rich, the excluded, and the disenfranchised. Using accessible data for Lowell and Chelmsford, this research can serve as a model for individuals who live on the periphery of society, either in poverty or in spatialized affluence.

What are Communities?

There are enclaves in Chelmsford and Lowell that appear to be bypassed and unnoticed by the Church. To reach entire communities, the Church must recalibrate its sights. Leslie Newbigin outlines the importance of community: "The hermeneutic of the gospel, that is, a community characterized by praise, truth, hope, community, mutual concern, and service. There is nothing

more powerful than a community of God's people when it wants to demonstrate to a watching world what it truly means to be a child of the King and a citizen of his Kingdom."⁹⁵

Margaret J. Wheatley also gives related insights that should challenge our preconceived notions of a community or its functions. Identifying "the paradox and promise of community"⁹⁶ she writes, "We human beings have a great need for one another. As described by the West African writer and teacher Malidoma Somé,⁹⁷ we have 'an instinct of community.' However, this instinct evolves together into growing fragmentation and separation. We experience increasing ethnic wars, community battlegrounds, and self-serving special interest groups."

Thoughtfully considering Wheatley's statement, we can acknowledge that communities today have developed a desire to separate and protect themselves from one another. Indeed, there are missing sectors and areas inside communities; the ecclesia must widen their perspectives and discover those communities that are hidden in plain sight.

Action Plan in Lowell

The city of Lowell undertook a comprehensive study titled "Partnership for Change,"⁹⁸ aimed at eliminating poverty. Its goal was to find ways of eradicating poverty in Lowell by lessening the impact of various crises on vulnerable individuals. In 2019, a new city-wide strategy to address the same issue called for significant modifications to the functioning of the Lowell Transitional Living Center, seeking to modify the church's role in the related activities.

⁹⁵ Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989).

⁹⁶ Margaret J. Wheatley, *Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2005).

⁹⁷ Malidoma Patrice Some, *Ritual: Power Healing and Community* (Arkana: Swan Raven & Company, 1993).

⁹⁸ "Partner For Change: Action Plan to End Homeless," Action Plan to End Homeless, last modified June 1, 2018, accessed October 7, 2020, Partner for Change: Action Plan to End Homeless, last modified June 1, 2008, accessed October 7, 2020, [https://www.lowellma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/845/10-Year-Action-Plan to-End-Homelessness-PDF?bidId=](https://www.lowellma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/845/10-Year-Action-Plan-to-End-Homelessness-PDF?bidId=).

Unfortunately, churches and ministries were found to merely supply food instead of achieving spiritual engagement with the materially and spiritually deprived.

People in Lowell tend to flock to the church or the ministry, but the church rarely comes to the homeless and the lost. Because ministries are scattered around this city, it is difficult for the homeless people to obtain enough assistance and support for their needs from any one ministry. Such data is especially crucial in exploring the two broad communities of Chelmsford and Lowell in Massachusetts' Merrimack Valley: these areas are separated not only by four miles but also by economic and social differences.

Advertisement

Regarding the final action, the Street Pastors are adept at recognizing additional eligible persons. Word-of-mouth advertising is a practical approach to hiring young volunteers. As a result, many Street Pastors are family, friends, or relatives. Networking is a third and associated coordinating duty. The scheme's director spends most of his time in official and informal meetings with top police officers, representatives of local governments, council members, club and bar owners, and numerous others.

Most experts in the local nightlife economy are now aware of their job and may quickly contact the scheme's headquarters if an issue or problem arises⁹⁹. Fundraising is unavoidably an additional important task. The organizer arranges a significant fundraising event and Christmas dinner once a year for police officers, local representatives, healthcare professionals, and bar and club proprietors to support the initiative. Entrepreneurs provide raffle prizes and, like the various churches, pay the entry costs for the Street Pastors to join the celebration. Additional funding

⁹⁹ CivicPlus, CO-OP Team.

sources include private donations, religious donations, and monetary help from the police, municipal governments, and commercial companies.

A fifth part of the coordinating duty is to support mandatory team training and education. After completing 12-day seminars on duties and obligations, alcohol and drug knowledge, counseling, mentorship, fundamental sociology, and street culture, the Street Pastors are prepared to manage various scenarios in the night-time market¹⁰⁰. Furthermore, the plan has introduced optional training programs in first-aid, physical handling, and intervention treatment for people under the influence of alcohol in recent years. The Street Pastors seem well prepared for the obstacles they may face throughout their nighttime shifts. Ultimately, the director and planner are responsible for individual requirements.

The director could recall just one Street Pastor whom he asked to resign because he was passionate about spreading his beliefs to everyone he encountered. Although it is fantastic that individuals are so enthusiastic about God and the Gospel, they really should not exploit the scheme to preach. Street Pastors proclaim the Good News by assisting their brothers rather than preaching to them all the time. That theological stance is ultimately what the Street Pastors advocate for.

Thomas Hobbes, a 17th century philosopher, was a prominent theorist in this dominating judicial-political approach to public order provision. He envisaged how the world would appear without a unified power and drew a bleak image of a state of nature in which people wage a civil war of all against all, motivated by their passions and goals. People are always in a state of terrible insecurity, dread, and death, which impedes economic development and the formation of civil society.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Foster, *Whatever Happened to The Rich Young Man?*

¹⁰¹ Ferguson and Starnes, "Leviathan."

¹⁰² A. Subedi, et. al, "Resettled Bhutanese Refugees in Ottawa: What Coping Strategies Promote Psychological Well-Being?" *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, vol. 51, no. 3, last modified February 11, 2019, 168–178, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0844562119828905>.

As logical beings, people would elect to accept a hypothetical pact allowing them to live a happier and healthier life under a very authoritarian regime. To flee the horrors of anarchy, a strong state must control the thoughts and feelings that drive greedy individuals into violent rivalry.¹⁰² Preserving civil safety has become the primary responsibility of police forces that have always been but are now more than ever, assisted by a plethora of plural and private security services with the advent of the contemporary state institution. Because of the interweaving of security and economic forces, security has become an identity identifier, representing a particular image of public order which continues to influence cultural reasoning and logic of who we are and what acceptable conduct is. In the nighttime economy, disruption, impairment, and crime caused by inebriated revelers have become central features of media attention, political debate, and social unrest, sparking the transformation of the U.K.'s inner cities into scrubbed spaces available to a specific responsible citizen, to the detriment of imperfect consumers pushed to the margins. This skewed depiction of security has resulted in a slew of disciplinary procedures.

Towards Security Practices

It is incorrect to equate security simply with member states because people adopt more human-centric and social actions to defend themselves from damage and hazards. Security is a pursuit, not a goal, and it relates to an actual and perceived state of being. People can feel safe even in danger, and vice versa. As a result, security is a considerably more polysomic term than criminologists typically imagine.

Furthermore, readers ought not to be misled by the philosopher's association of security with simple survival because they are taught in his previous writings that this notion represents an

essential public benefit associated with happiness and welfare.¹⁰³ There is a connection between purpose and hardship, which is an intriguing topic, and it enables scholars and practitioners to better understand the church's role worldwide amid the prevalence of poverty. The mission represents God's desire for the world. God is on purpose, as the Scriptures attest. Throughout history, He has been on a mission to achieve His purpose, praising His glory, establishing His reign, and restoring the world to Himself. God of purpose is active in achieving that goal worldwide, throughout the past, present, and future.

The mission is now the dynamic role of the church in conveying the Good News of redemption to the end of the globe and is tied to the church's socio-humanitarian vocation. The link between the church's socio-humanitarian and evangelical mandates may be understood from the perspective of proclaiming the Good News of God's Kingdom. The Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch, provides an excellent theological framework for mission-related to poverty. God, according to the Bible, is good. Throughout the Bible, He expresses His excellent care for the poor, powerless, abandoned, ostracized, widowed, orphaned, and foreigners. As a result, everyone in His Company must likewise exhibit goodness and love. As a result, a believer who loves God must also be kind and merciful to others. There is no religion until it cares for the poor. That is why the goal is more than just saving souls; it is also about healing all types of wounds and agony that individuals experience. A comprehensive understanding of the church's mission necessitates care for people's spiritual and bodily needs and the redemption of all creation that weeps for redemption. Likewise, the pursuit of redemption should not be defined exclusively in spiritual terms but should include all elements of human existence, changing relationships, people's living situations, institutions, and the planet.

¹⁰³ Bedaso and Duko, "Epidemiology of Depression Among Displaced People."

Thus, the church's duty is to confront the country's social, cultural, and economic destruction that has caused so much misery among the people. The mission aspect of the church, however, invokes conscious, active action in society to promote spirituality, assist the impoverished, and defend the downtrodden. It extends beyond the church's boundaries and engages in mission focus points such as evangelization and work for peace and justice. According to this viewpoint, modern evangelism and ministries ought to be at the frontline of mission commitment and activity in evangelism and social advancement. As a result, the Good News preached is meaningless unless it addresses the daily challenges people face and frees them from physical and spiritual barriers. For its evangelistic purpose, contemporary evangelism and ministries must design new tactics to promote collaboration between Lowell's poor neighborhoods and the Chelmsford region's wealthier areas.

Current Role of the Church

Though the church stands in its close vicinity, people of either city mentioned above are unwilling or unable to reach out to it. An additional alarming statistic by Pew Research indicates that both Massachusetts and the neighboring New Hampshire are the minor religious areas in the United States, with only 33% of adults claiming to be religious. These facts seem to have a domino effect on the youth of U.S.A.¹⁰⁴ Lifeway Research confirms this with a recent study, which shows that 34% of young adults under 22 attend church at least twice a month, while 66% either attend once a month or fewer or do not attend church at all.¹⁰⁵ These statistics are concerning, as these young people are the future leaders of our communities and yet have little or no spiritual

¹⁰⁴ Michael Lipka and Benjamin Wormald, "How Religious Is Your State?," *Religious*, *Pew Research*, last modified 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/29/how-religious-is-your-state/?state=alabama>.

¹⁰⁵ Aaron Earls, "Lifeway Research," *Religious Research*, last modified 2019, <https://research.lifeway.com/2019/01/15/most-teenagers-drop-out-of-church-as-young-adults/>.

foundation. One way of reversing these statistics could be for local churches to cease competing against each other and develop a conducive atmosphere for partnering, networking, and meeting. They need to involve young adults, discover why young people do not attend church, and explore innovative solutions to reverse this trend.

Group prayers are offered for the Street Pastors and people working in or visiting the city, and Bible verses are read to underline the spiritual components of patrolling. Street Pastors, in general, envisage their primary role as keeping people safe by looking after the vulnerable.

Most pastors do not come across as physically strong, but they apply social skills to the situation, engaging people in Street Pastors, in general, envisage their primary role as keeping people safe by looking after vulnerable, often drunk, partygoers. They depict this mission as offering people care and parenthood.

Volunteers are grouped into mixed-gender groups of four to five persons as part of the preparations. The quantity of teams dispatched reflects the availability of qualified street pastors and the city's geography. Every group has a captain with a radio and a cellphone to connect with the Pastors' base and, whenever available, the police. Another individual is carrying a form that will be used to record the night's interactions and deeds. This contains space to record primary social contacts, count the number of items picked up, such as glass containers and lost goods, and list items handed out, such as bottles of water and flip-flops.

Street Pastor teams patrol simultaneously and may split off in pairs, frequently walking on opposite sides of the streets. For safety and insurance, pastors are urged to maintain constant eye contact with the rest of the gathering. The patrols follow their set time-space patterns, with two-hour shifts interspersed by meals back at a central base built in a church or the community center. The base is an essential permanent area in the patrol's mobility, serving as a starting and ending

point and a place of sanctuary and prayer. Each team follows a predetermined itinerary, which is frequently coordinated with the police to guarantee the safety and effectiveness of Street Pastors' work.

However, as seen in the following example, the recurrence of Street Pastor routes and actions corresponds with the rhythmicity of the detailed urban outreach activity. Street Pastors are devout Christians who think they can be called to a particular location by the Holy Spirit; this is seen in an excerpt from a conversation with a senior pastor, who recalls arriving at a park seat just as a blanket drifted away from a homeless person who was asleep.

Comparison and Contrast

While Street Pastors' fundamental role is to patrol the streets in the nighttime economy, talking and helping people as they leave public houses and nightclubs, the culture in U.S.A. is an obstacle to their work for various reasons.

1. The legal age for drinking in the U.K. is 18 years, whereas in the U.S.A. it is 21 years, thus leading to more inebriated people on the streets at night and the related issues.
2. Drinking in the U.K. is the main reason for meeting socially "at the pub" whereas in the U.S.A. alcohol is usually consumed in restaurants and in homes.
3. The Street Pastors' pivotal role is to care for those who are publicly inebriated or high on drugs at night.

W.O.N. Ministry does not just care for the inebriated but also engage with the homeless, sex workers, and drug addicts. W.O.N. reaches out to anyone seeking help by supplying appropriate resources or encouraging them to seek care at the Unitas Life Center.

4. Due to license-based operating hours, U.S.A. pubs close at 11 pm and nightclubs close at 2 am; therefore, the hours of operation for Street Pastors are 10 pm to 2:30 am.
W.O.N. ministry must operate from 6 pm to 9 pm as the Homeless Shelter closes at 6 pm, and those requiring help will be on the streets for the next few hours. The intention is to eventually serve the community throughout the day and build relationships and trust on the streets, in shelters, and schools.
5. Street Pastors should provide bottles of water to help those drunk and flip-flops for the ladies struggling with their high heels. W.O.N. ministry must provide essential items such as sleeping bags, blankets, socks, gloves, hats, clothing, drinks, and food.
6. Street Pastors shall not provide a building. W.O.N. must provide a building named Unitas (meaning United) as a shared resource for connections between the spatialized and the marginalized populations in their own neighborhood. This will serve as a place where people can go for shelter for a few hours and be provided with a warm drink and snack. Likewise, it will be a place where the unchurched, wealthier community, can find unity in a location that truly pursues liberty, even pre-Christian in presentation and opportunity. Restrooms with showers will be available, and volunteer staff are to encourage and offer spiritual input bringing the spatialized and marginalized together. This partnership will develop Unitas into the Third Place, where the can spatialized offer various professional help such as legal aid, medical, and beautification, restoring people's self-worth and confidence.
7. The Street Pastor's uniform is a black and blue coat with "Street Pastors" written on the back and a cap or beanie hat; however, people may mistake them for the police due to their

uniform. W.O.N. should have red and white jackets with “Winning Our Neighborhood” written on the back to show we are non-threatening and welcoming.

8. Street Pastors do not tend to use a central hub if people require attention. W.O.N. must provide a double-decker Red Bus to enable a mobile Third Place, traveling to various locations throughout the city, which will enable the ministry to reach a wider audience bringing together the marginalized and spatialized. The bus will be a connecting point and modified to provide cool drinks and snacks in the summer and a hot drink in the winter. Personal prayer will be available on the second floor.
9. Street Pastors only liaise with the police. W.O.N. Ministries will also communicate with the Sherriff, Fire department, and EMT.
10. Street Pastors require every team member to be over 18 years of age and show prior commitment to a church for more than 12 months.

W.O.N. Ministries will encourage 16-year-old youth and older to engage with the ministry, allowing the spatialized youth an opportunity to experience life on the streets. We would welcome unchurched people who are willing to use their gifts and talents in the ministry as it not only creates an opportunity for them to build relationships in their neighborhood but with the church.

Due to the difference in culture, I will refer to the Street Pastors U.K. as a blueprint from which I can glean and build a similar ministry for Merrimack Valley and beyond, a ministry which is going to be named W.O.N. (Winning our Neighborhoods) Ministry.

Introduction of W.O.N. Ministry

Electronic Resource

I wanted to provide a simple resource that people can use even if they have not been theologically trained but have the heart to help people, they never thought they could help. Isa (58:8) discusses reaching the orphans and widows in the community, and by doing so, God becomes our rearguard or has our back. This resource will effectively explain the procedure for setting up a non-profit organization called W.O.N. Ministry, that will connect the marginalized and the spatialized through the church. The best vehicle to do this in modern society is to utilize technology for good. Thus, I present a small electronic book with an introductory video welcoming and encouraging those interested in starting this ministry in their neighborhoods. Moreover, I offer a 7-page step-by-step informational resource that contains guidelines, requirements, connections, launch, and training regarding the work of W.O.N.¹⁰⁶ Finally, the second video allows me to thank people for their interest and encourage them to contact me. This video will be available on YouTube,¹⁰⁷ and a W.O.N. Ministry website will be subsequently developed.

If you would like to see our startup handbook, our primary artifact in this W.O.N. Ministry project, please click the following banner.



Stephen Blandino asks a question that appears to be crucial in understanding culture: “Why do you do that? You would probably hear, more times than you can count, ‘That is just the way we do

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix D.

¹⁰⁷ See Appendix E.

things around here' Culture is the unwritten rules of behavior. It appears that Churches have cultures too.”¹⁰⁸

In the scriptures, God told Moses, “Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you” (Josh 1:3). The Lord has WON every battle, and we who are aligned with Him have also W.O.N. “But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.” (John 4:4)

After various qualitative site visits and interviews to study the community and quantitative analysis via surveys, the W.O.N. program can reflect the closeness of the spatialized and marginalized community that New England represents, and more such transitions can happen across U.S.A. The proof for the same is that the ministry of Street Pastors was introduced in 2013 in Chico, California, and then in Bangor, Maine, in 2014, but there has been no further expansion to any other state. The aspiration for the W.O.N. Ministry is to initially introduce it in the city of Lowell with the intention to develop a ripple-effect by widening its influence within the Merrimack Valley and beyond, to Worcester and Lawrence, where communication has already commenced with the Dream Center in Lawrence.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Blandino, *Creating Your Church's Culture: How To Uproot Mediocrity and Create a Healthy Organizational Culture*. (United States of America: n.p, 2014).

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

While spending time and money in pubs and nightclubs in the U.K. as a younger man, I was engaged several times by men and women who cared enough to spark conversations with me and show regard towards me. I did not need them. However, I never forgot their goodwill.

W.O.N. Ministry – Winning Our Neighborhoods

The resolution of this research is to use the blueprint of Street Pastors in U.K. and adapt it for the United States, starting with the Merrimack area of New England, specifically Lowell, Massachusetts. W.O.N. (Winning Our Neighborhoods) Ministry will develop social entrepreneurship in the heart of the church, enlisting other churches and groups who desire to help those on the margins of life, bringing the spatialized and marginalized together in eradicating poverty.

W.O.N. paves a new way of helping our community, reaching the lost and the hidden in our communities. This has been my personal desire, a yearning to influence the marginalized who live on our streets and yet are hidden in plain sight, the homeless, downtrodden, drug addicts, and sex workers, and also the spatialized affluent, those who seem to have everything and yet live in spiritual poverty. How can these two people groups come together to transform themselves and their neighborhoods? After many hours of praying and researching, I realized the perfect solution that will enable these communities to join their hearts together. So, I welcome all to W.O.N (Winning our Neighborhoods) Ministry.

In the scripture, God spoke to Moses and said, “Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you.” (Josh.1:3)

The Lord has won every battle, and we who are aligned with Him have also W.O.N. “But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world” (1 John 4:4).

After various qualitative site visits and interviews to study New England’s community and quantitative analysis via surveys, the W.O.N. program should reflect the closeness of the spatialized and marginalized community that New England represents. The aspiration for the W.O.N. ministry is to be initially introduced in Lowell, with the intention to develop the ripple-effect by widening its influence within the Merrimack Valley and beyond, to Worcester and Lawrence, where communication has already commenced with the Dream Center in Lawrence.¹⁰⁹ Then, it shall move further afield, expanding to other states in U.S.A.

L. Gregory Jones states that Greg Dees, often referred to as the father of social entrepreneurship as an academic discipline, claims that “Social Entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector by:

- Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value).
- Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission.
- Engaging in the process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning.
- Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently at hand, and
- Exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Merrimack Valley Dream Center, “Merrimack Valley Dream Center.”

¹¹⁰ L. Gregory Jones, *Christian Social Innovation: Renewing Wesleyan Witness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016).

What Happened to the Church?

One day over lunch, Dees asks Jones a challenging question: “What happened to the Church? I am curious why the Church lost interest in entrepreneurial approaches to social needs?” Jones also wonders about the question, pondering over the Wesleyan movement and thinking about the many Christian communities who have their origins and inspiration in a Wesleyan vision of Christian witness. He finds Dee’s question disturbing, because in twenty-first-century U.S.A., interest in entrepreneurship is primarily a secular phenomenon. Jones conjectures that we have forgotten who we are and that we have forgotten the story of God’s love and redemption, having lived for too long as “practical atheists” who have the form of faith but little of the substance.¹¹¹

Les Isaacs stated that Christians and non-Christians have considered the streets as a realm of uncertainty, representing everything outside the peaceful and private spaces that many strive to create and maintain. The streets have become a prefix that conveys the absence of structure, a euphemism for an alternative space of belonging and identity. The streets have been swallowed up over generations and are linked to loss, death, and fear. Therefore, they must be reclaimed.

To that end, W.O.N. Ministry’s core values are:

1. The sacredness and sanctity of all human life.
2. The importance of valuing and honoring the community.
3. The development of integrity, which is a vital part of the fabric of society.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

4. The desire to take personal responsibility; some people blame others all too easily, their parents, environment, or others, rather than being accountable for their circumstances.
5. The development of individuals to their fullest potential, so that they believe that everyone can significantly contribute to society and spread this message.

Jones encourages the Church to have its internal integrity and witness so that it can rediscover a vision for social innovation and entrepreneurship. While this is not necessary for our relevance, it will help us to become intrinsic witnesses to God, enabling everything to grow anew.

Implications

The focus of Street Pastors is on the nighttime economy, particularly on people who are inebriated or suffering the effect of narcotics. These are common occurrences throughout the U.K, where pubs close at 11 pm, and there is a mass migration, like the wildebeest on the Masai Mara, of the drunken people from pubs to nightclubs. In turn, a restricted deployment of Street Pastors by W.O.N ministry in the U.S.A. is potentially possible, in keeping with the unique aspects of its culture.

W.O.N. Ministry can come to the fore in creating a newer perspective that not only applies to inebriation but also can enable engagement with homeless people and sex workers. The Ministry can operate during mornings as well as evenings, finding a unique way of reaching communities and those in the streets who may have succumbed to alcohol and drugs the night before and are then regretful.

There appears to be a critical lack of connection between the marginalized and the spatialized, located in peripheral areas of a community, which could affect their access to quality education, employment, affordable housing, and integration with mainstream life.¹¹² As the demographic of Lowell reports over 70 different languages spoken,¹¹³ Street Pastors must cater to these diverse group of inhabitants fundamental by patrolling the streets in the nighttime economy, talking and helping people as they leave public spaces and nightclubs. This way, W.O.N. Ministry can “Winning Our Neighborhood” by connecting the marginalized and spatialized and “Building Hope through Relationships.”

Combating inequality

Despite the above constraints, this study shows that people are actively working to address unfairness in community life. They fight injustice and its effects individually, in communities, with people they know and agree. This is primarily a social matter and is typically focused on space-based solidarity. Such involvement, however, is typically concealed and goes unnoticed by others. It is segmented and subdivided and may be neglected since it is invisible to many or is not perceived as the correct form of change. Although it is easy to portray these behaviors as an ordinary part of life, it is vital to note that they are quite dynamic and imaginative; such are seeking to bring about positive change. This suggests that community-led transformation is more widespread than previously imagined.

Individuals are continuously developing what can called social innovation activity sectors. Whereas these activities and processes are essential and may have some characteristics that are

¹¹² Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*.

¹¹³ Lowell Public Schools, “English Language Education,” Government, *Lowell Public Schools*, last modified 2022, accessed October 25, 2022, <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/domain/98>.

similar to current secular community innovation initiatives, they usually follow entirely different paths: they stress collective action and are driven by solidarity. These initiatives are healing and powerful. Indeed, people express a greater sense of self-worth and belonging when they act with others, particularly when they create spaces where they may exercise their own beliefs or values and challenge dominant behaviors or narratives. This opportunity impacts how people evaluate progress and engagement.

When communities come together to solve an issue, they can push for change in unconventional ways. This can be disconcerting for foreign entities and the powers that be, and as a result, it is routinely rejected. Although the proclamation of the message of God is gaining speed, poverty is still visible and naturalized in the borders of Lowell, Massachusetts, which has a high poverty level, and those living in the contiguous Chelmsford region, which houses the rich.

It would be a massive error for the church to argue that it does not realize the acute need among its deprived members. As a result, the subject of poverty must be treated seriously. Regrettably, NewSong Community Church is not doing enough to combat poverty at present. Whereas the causes of poverty are varied, the church leaders have developed a culture that prioritizes spiritual growth over the significance of alleviating poverty. The church has grown so heaven-focused that it is no longer functional on earth. Some pastors choose to speak on other issues rather than confronting the problem of poverty.

NewSong's lack of concern with poverty may be ascribed partly to a selective Biblical reading that ignores sections that stress the significance of empowering the destitute. Although it has taught stewardship, there has been the minimal implementation of poverty-fighting programs. The church's leadership has not demonstrated prudent stewardship. As a result, its aspiring leaders

and evangelicals lack able mentors. Many individuals would be motivated to serve as committed stewards if this teaches its members the importance of addressing the issue of poverty.

There appears to be a variety of rationales behind the poverty-related engagement of faith-based organizations that have acquired support recently. Indeed, the story of Street Pastors demonstrates how quickly a faith-based volunteer organization may expand. Street Pastors meet numerous critical engagement requirements, they are increasingly trusted in the public sphere. Such faith-based organizations and individuals are considered trustworthy and intrinsically good, and they also have an appeal based on resource and governance justifications, inviting many interested volunteers who have resources, want experience, and are willing to provide moral leadership.

Limitations of the Study

The only opportunity I had to experience the concept of street pastoring was through attending a two-day training event in Bangor, Maine. While this experience was useful, it was limited to theoretical training with no practical experience. The four Zoom meetings with the Ascension Trust leadership team (Street Pastors' Headquarters) were very informative in this regard, and as a result I got to visit the Street Pastors team in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in addition to walking its streets on Saturday, 26th November 2022, in the center of Belfast City from 9 pm to 2 am.

During the upcoming visit to the United Kingdom, I have been invited to glean practical experience from the leadership and staff of Space4 ministries¹¹⁴ in Houghton le Spring, England; I look forward to being further enlightened by that experience.

¹¹⁴ "Space4 Community Project," accessed November 8, 2022, <https://space4hls.org>.

Significance of Further Research

Will W.O.N ministries become successful in all 50 states within the USA? Keeping in question in mind, this research focuses on the Merrimack Valley area of Massachusetts, specifically Lowell, where this ministry was launched, while delineating the wish to expand to other cities. Further research is required to determine if any restrictions must be imposed in the specific area of operation, if volunteers there are willing to build relationships with the government and church, and if there are specific needs for any given area.

Going forward, the aim is to grow the footprint of the W.O.N Ministry. Therefore, developing relationships via social media and connections with existing ministries throughout the country will help introduce the affirmative effects of connecting the marginalized and spatialized.

Further Scope

The Third Place: The first place is home, the second place is work, but the Third Place is a friendly, welcoming space away from home and work. Ideally, Street Pastors can provide the needy a building that can be marked as a Third Place; a connecting space where the marginalized and spatialized can unite, where the local church can gather a firm knowledge of the needs of its respective community, where it can meet those needs, where professionals could help the marginalized and recapture the ground lost due to the church's previous inaction. In this regard, Elaine Graham and Stephen Lowe accurately state, "Christianity has been an urban religion since its very beginnings."¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Graham and Lowe, *What Makes a Good City?*

Moreover, Keith Foster states, “Third Place are places that offer social and emotional support.... a place that facilitates happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work.”¹¹⁶

Freedom Land: Research various grants and finances available and donors to purchase and develop land away from where the people reside. This will be an oasis to help people understand they have a future in Christ and the opportunity to move from their past, renew old mindsets, and wean off drugs, alcohol, and addiction. Resulting in godly men and women, people of integrity, amalgamating them back into society, a contributor to change, and a follower of Jesus. Funding would be required for buildings and full-time staff.

Dry pub (bar): A dry pub would appear as a standard bar, albeit offering mocktails instead of alcohol. It would be available for the youth during daytime, for special events, and in the evening, so that both the marginalized and spatialized can enjoy a good night out with work colleagues, family, and friends, without getting inebriated. This facility can truly serve as a Third Place, a home away from home; its unique approach will aim to offer recovering addicts the opportunity to enjoy life without any pressure to drink, in what can be termed a safe zone.

Dream Center: This counts as an appealing opportunity to provide not only another Third-Place concept but a space that connects those in the margins with the spatialized affluent, where the professional services of the wealthy can be offered to the deprived. This will enable different

¹¹⁶ Foster, *Whatever Happened to The Rich Young Man?*

perspectives on reaching out to the lost. If this genre of ministry gains popularity, it will ensure a space for collaboration of different minds that desire to help those who are lost.

Ulmer Nest (Sleeping Pods): This counts as a unique approach to helping the homeless community. Ulmer Nest observed that the number of homeless is increasing and the death rate among the poor, especially in the winter months, is escalating at a perturbing rate in its country. Thus, it introduced sleeping pods called Ulmer Nest that were made available to the homeless especially during the winter months.

The pods were first introduced in the city of Ulm, 75 miles from Munich, made available primarily in parkland areas. They have a maximum capacity of two people, equipped with fresh-air circulation, solar panels, and a radio network. When a pod is vacated, a motion sensor alerts the users so they can clean the pods after use. The charity implementing these pods state that they are not alternatives to staying in hostels or housing facilities, but rather an “emergency last resort” that keeps one from having to sleep outdoors at night.¹¹⁷ Thus, I have contacted this organization hoping that these pods could be used in U.S.A as part of the Street Pastors and W.O.N Ministry project.

This study’s goal was to advance and cultivate the ecclesia’s footprint throughout U.S.A through initiatives to holistically eradicate poverty. My research involved assessments of people’s reaction to W.O.N ministry: the reactions were mostly positive, with many showing their interest to willingly participate its projects.

¹¹⁷ Luana Steffen, “Germany Installs Solar-Powered Sleeping Pods To Protect the Homeless,” Charity, last modified 2018, accessed November 1, 2022, <https://www.intelligentliving.co/germany-solar-powered-sleeping-pods-homeless/amp/>.

If an opportunity is made available to replicate this assignment, I would further research ministries similar to Street Pastors in U.S.A., such as Teen Challenge or Canaan Land ministries, to gain a more comprehensive knowledge regarding the church's role in addressing poverty, an endeavor which may give rise to more ideas regarding the expansion of W.O.N. Ministry.

“While Women weep, as they do now, I’ll fight; while children go hungry, as they do now I’ll fight; while men go to prison, in and out, in and out, as they do now, I’ll fight; while there is a poor lost girl upon the streets, while there remains one dark soul without the light of God, I’ll fight, I’ll fight to the very end!”¹¹⁸ William Booths final speech.

¹¹⁸ The Salvation Army, “William Booth’s Final Speech,” Christian Charity, *The Salvation Army*, last modified 2013, accessed November 1, 2022, <https://salvationarmy.ca/prairie/2013/07/william-booths-final-speech-inspiration-for-new-ad/>.

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APPENDIX A
CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY WEEK 1

Thank you for participating in this survey. If you prefer not to answer any of the following questions, please pass. All information will remain anonymous.

Demographics

1. Gender?

Female

Male

2. Age?

Under 18

19-30

31-50

Over 50

3. Race?

Caucasian/White

African American

Hispanic

Asian/Pacific Islander

Brazilian

Latino

Multiracial

Other (please specify)

African

4. Marital Status?

Single, never married

Married

Separated or divorced

Widowed

5. Your highest level of formal education?

High School or equivalent

Some college or technical training

Associate degree

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Post-doctoral studies

6. Employment Status?

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed full-time | <input type="checkbox"/> Employed part-time | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retired | <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time student | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer | |

7. Household income

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to \$75,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$76,000 to \$100,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over \$100,000 | | |

Christian Practices

8. Age you were first introduced to religious practices.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 61 and over | | | |

9. Age you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 41-45 | <input type="checkbox"/> 46-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-55 | <input type="checkbox"/> 56-60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 61-65 | <input type="checkbox"/> 66-70 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 70 | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> I have not accepted | | |

10. How often do you participate in or do private prayer and meditation?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly or more | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Few times a year | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know how to pray | | |

11. How often do you participate in or do Bible readings?

- Daily Weekly or more 2-3 times a month
 Once a month Few times a year Never
 I have difficulty reading the Bible

12. How often do you participate or serve in compassionate ministry? (Either groups or individuals)

- Daily Weekly or more 2-3 times a month
 Once a month Few times a year Never

13. How often do you participate in evangelistic ministries?

- Daily Weekly or more 2-3 times a month
 Once a month Few times a year Never

14. What are your thoughts about the Rich Young Ruler?

Thank you for completing this survey.

APPENDIX B

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY WEEK 2

Thank you for participating in this survey. If you prefer not to answer any of the following questions, please pass. All information will remain anonymous.

NewSong Community Church

1. Your Age?

Under 18

19-30

31-50

Over 50

2. How do you perceive the financial status of the church?

Healthy

Adequate

Inadequate

3. How would you describe your spiritual life?

Exploring Christ

Growing in Christ

Close to Christ

Christ Centered

4. What does Jesus mean when He tells the young rich man to sell his goods? To release his:

Possessions

Emotions

Heart

Own desires

All of the Above

5. What did Jesus mean by “give to the poor”?

Finances

Time

Care

Love

All of the above

6. What does it mean to become a disciple of Jesus?

7. When thinking of helping others, what do you say?

I don't feel able I am willing with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit

8. How important is it to take the message beyond the walls?

Highly important Moderately important Not important

Never thought about it

9. List 1 to 3 in order of importance.

Giving financially Reaching the community practically

Prayer

10. Why do you think the rich young man walked away sad?

11. What can NewSong Church do to help you get closer to God?

Thank you for completing this survey

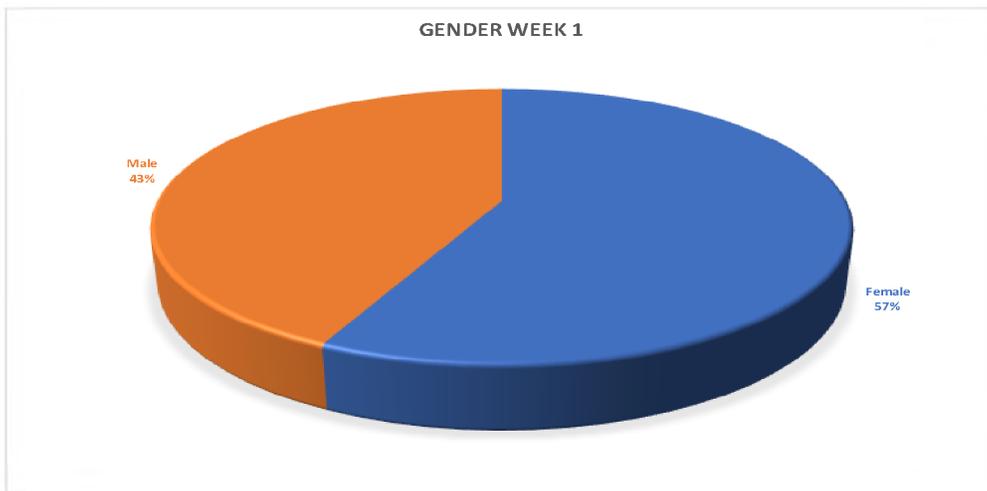
APPENDIX C

PIE CHARTS

WEEK 1

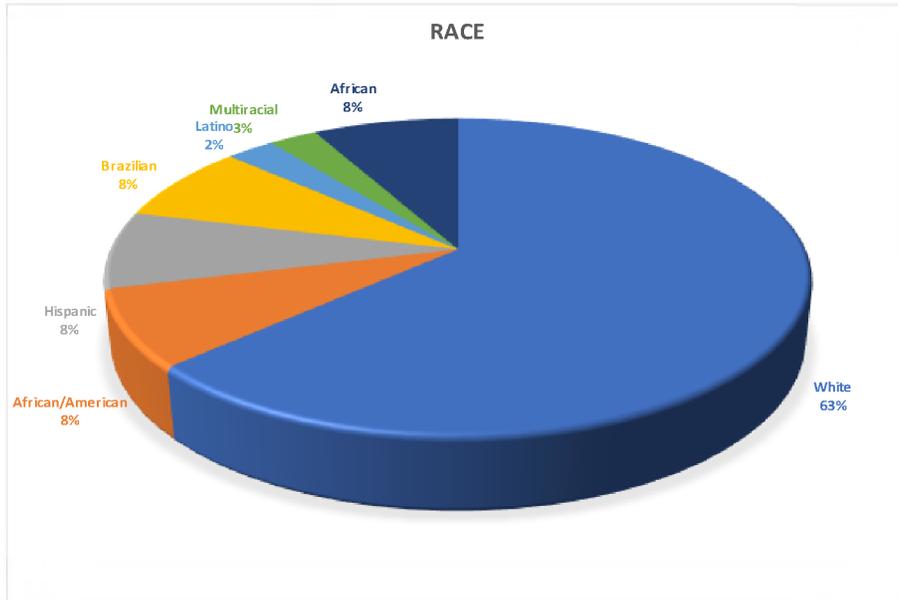
Question 1

Female	24
Male	18



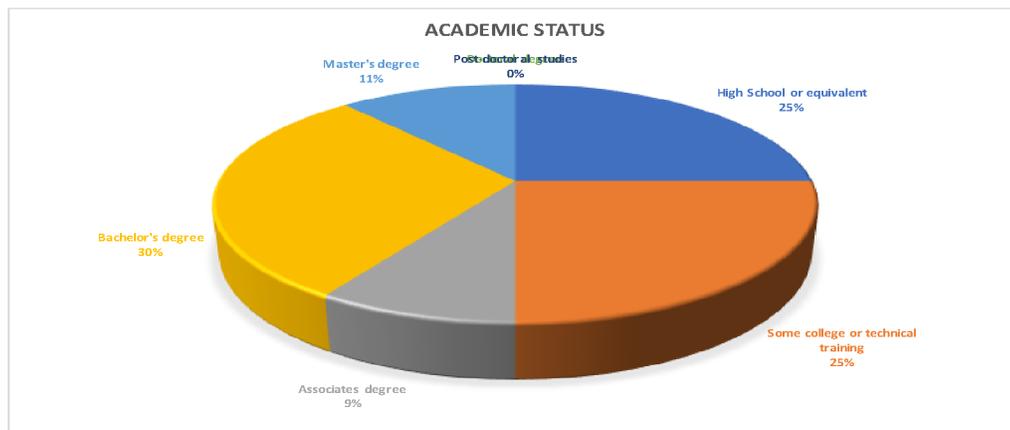
Question 3

White	24
African/American	3
Hispanic	3
Brazilian	3
Latino	1
Multiracial	1
African	3



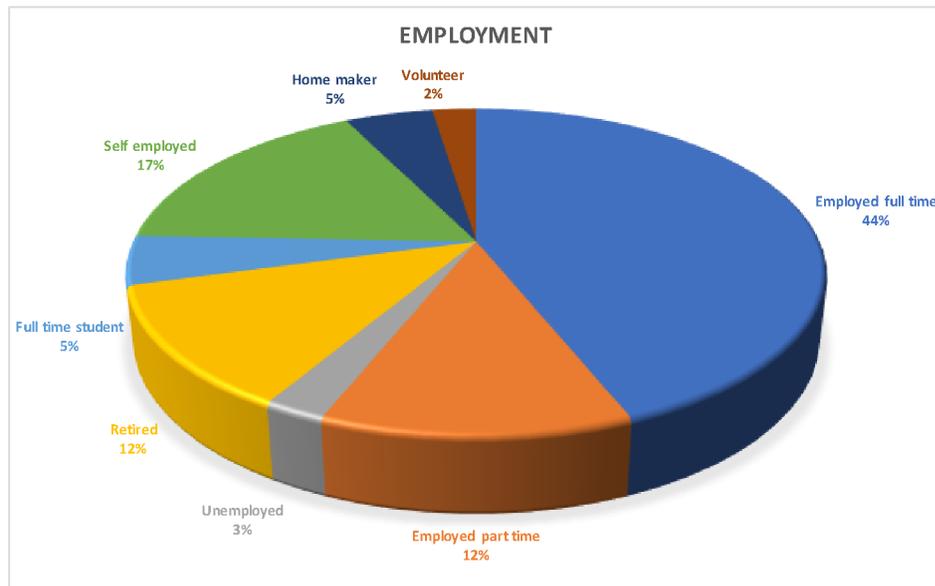
Question 5

High School or equivalent	11
Some college or technical training	11
Associates degree	4
Bachelor's degree	13
Master's degree	5
Doctoral degree	0
Post-doctoral studies	0



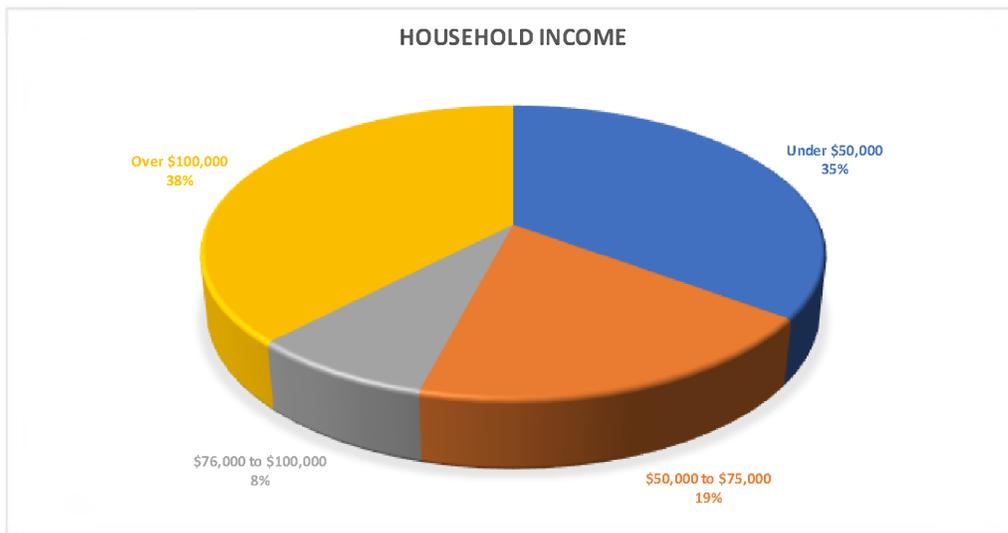
Question 6

Employed full time	18
Employed part time	5
Unemployed	1
Retired	5
Full time student	2
Self employed	7
Home maker	2
Volunteer	1



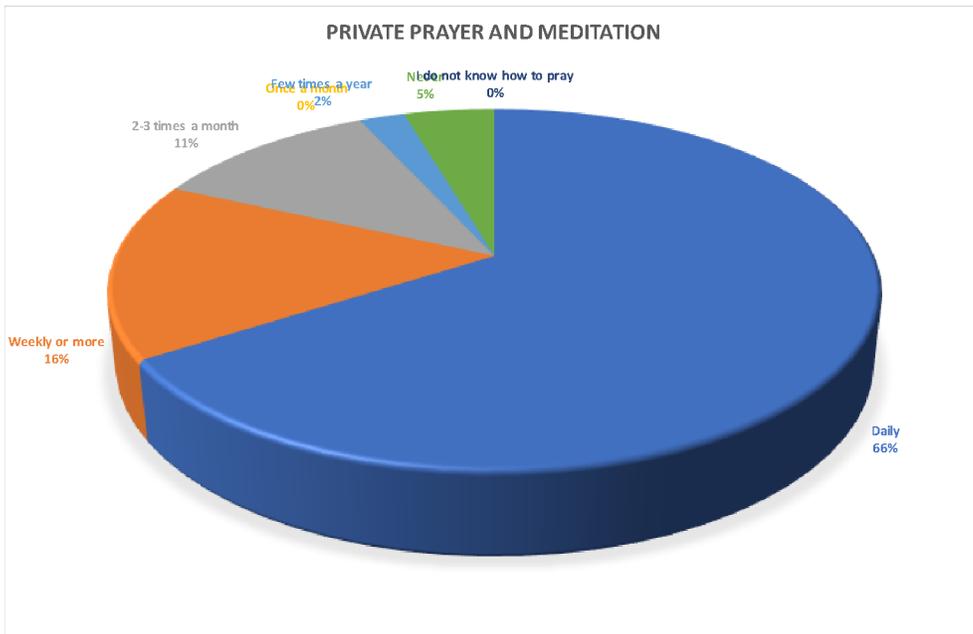
Question 7

Under \$50,000	13
\$50,000 to \$75,000	7
\$76,000 to \$100,000	3
Over \$100,000	14



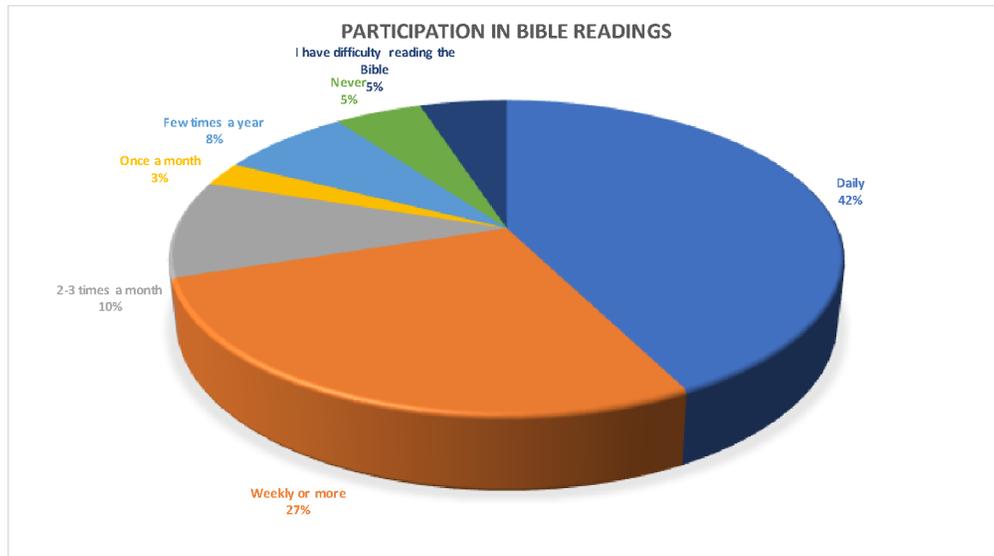
Question 10

Daily	29
Weekly or more	7
2-3 times a month	5
Once a month	0
Few times a year	1
Never	2
I do not know how to pray	0



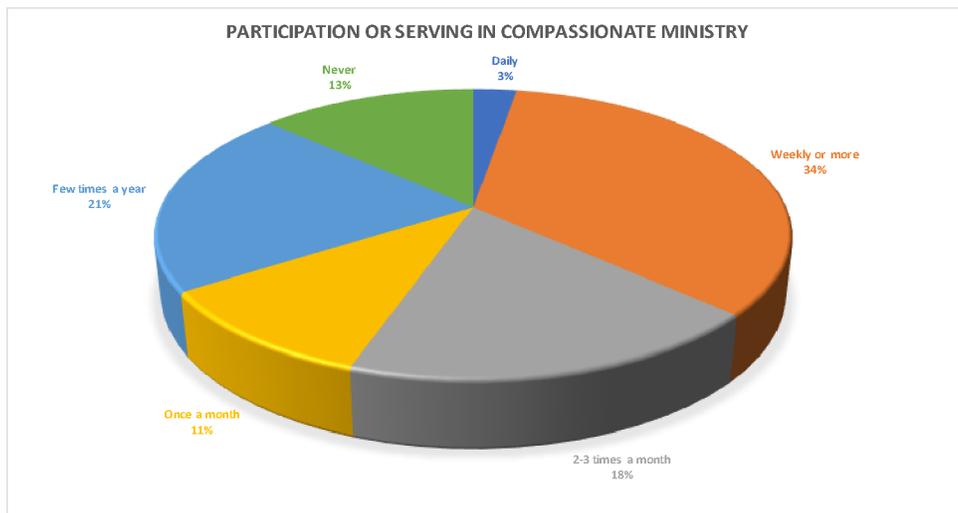
Question 11

Daily	17
Weekly or more	11
2-3 times a month	4
Once a month	1
Few times a year	3
Never	2
I have difficulty reading the Bible	2



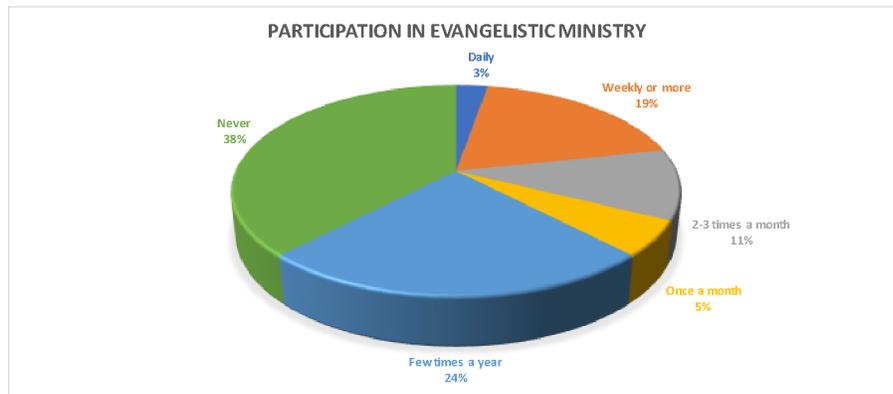
Question 12

Daily	1
Weekly or more	13
2-3 times a month	7
Once a month	4
Few times a year	8
Never	5



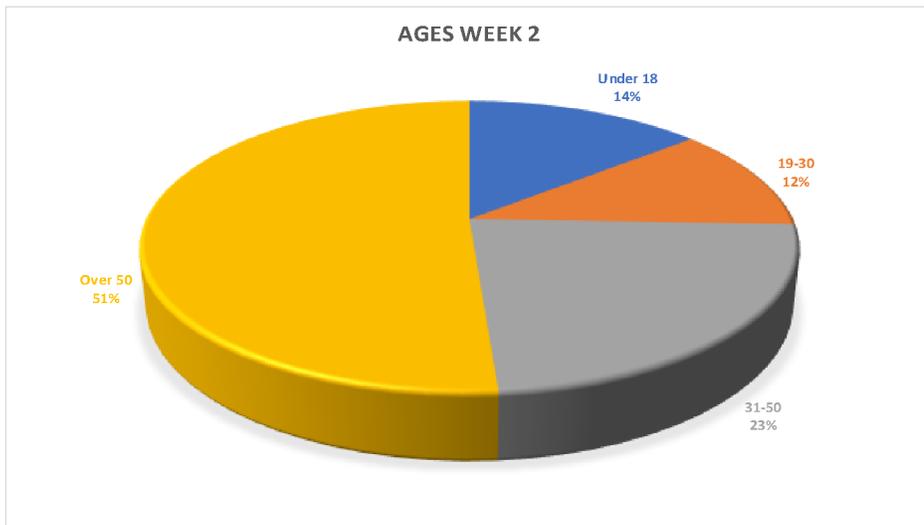
Question 13

Daily	1
Weekly or more	7
2-3 times a month	4
Once a month	2
Few times a year	9
Never	14



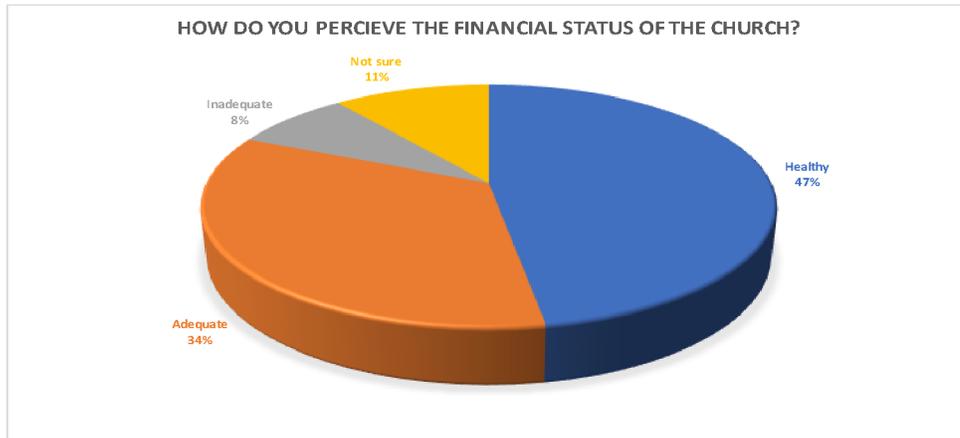
Week 2
Question 1

Under 18	6
19-30	5
31-50	10
Over 50	22



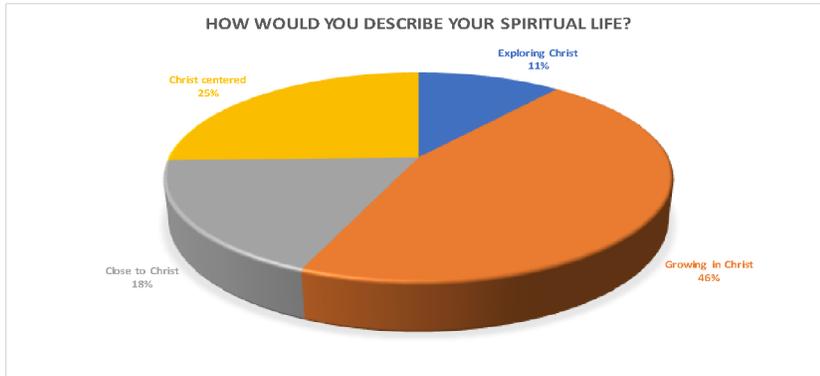
Question 2

Healthy	18
Adequate	13
Inadequate	3
Not sure	4



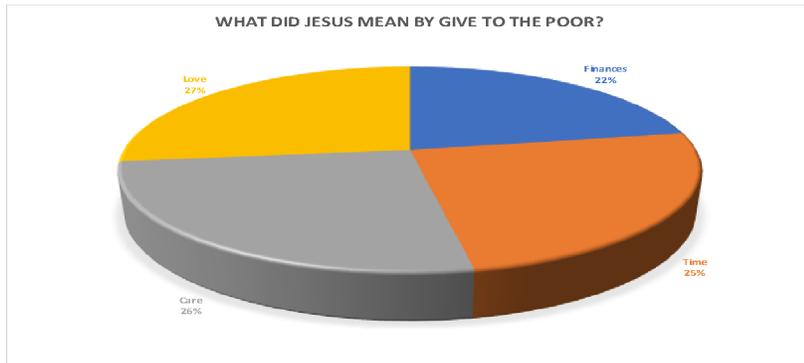
Question 3

Exploring Christ	6
Growing in Christ	25
Close to Christ	10
Christ centered	14



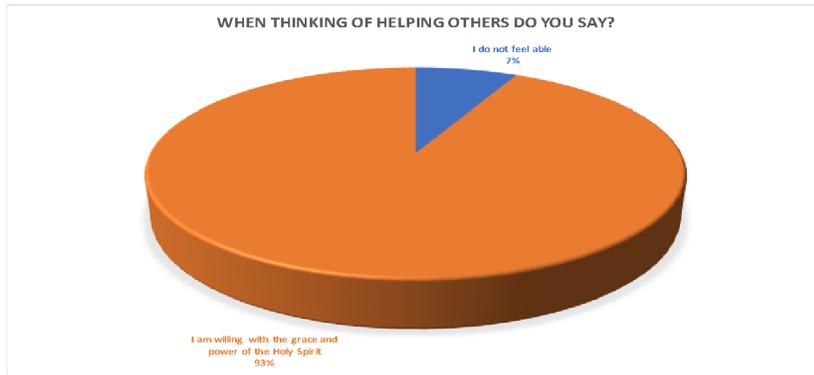
Question 5

Finances	34
Time	38
Care	40
Love	41



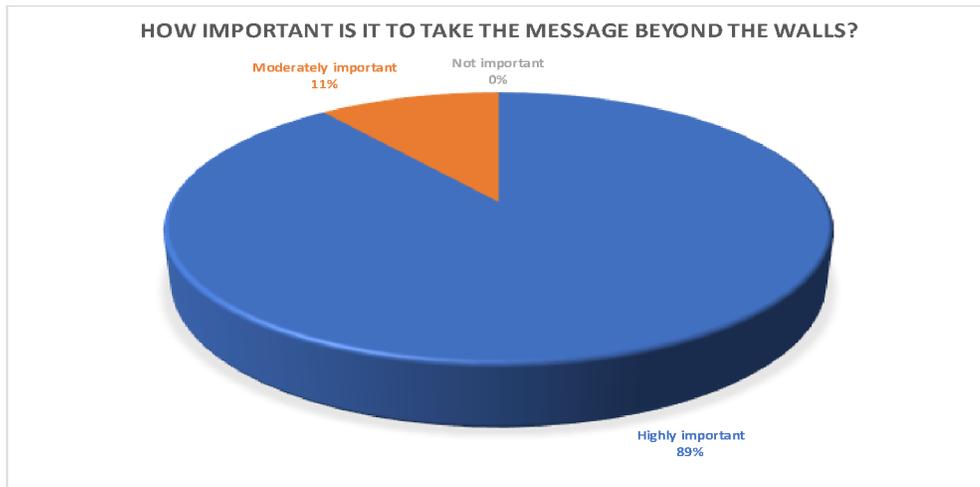
Question 7

I do not feel able	3
I am willing with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit	38



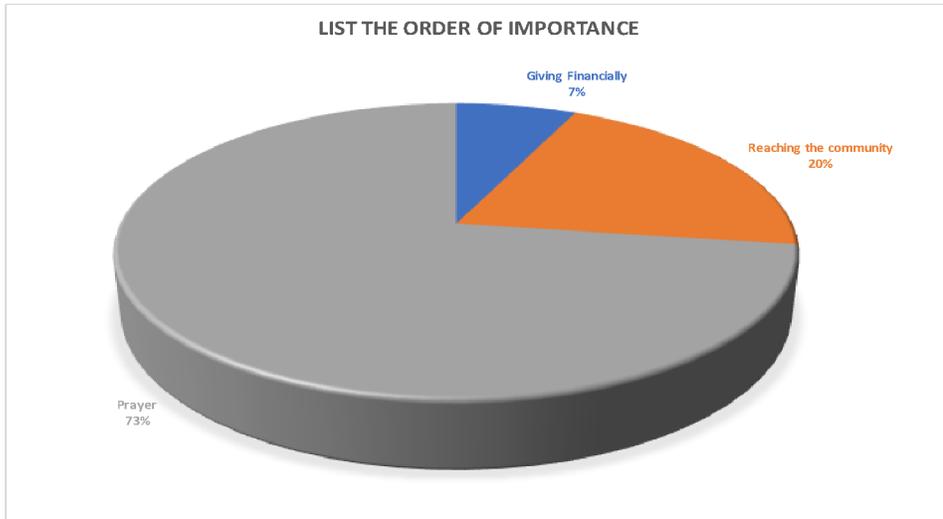
Question 8

Highly important	34
Moderately important	4
Not important	0



Question 9

Giving Financially	3
Reaching the community	9
Prayer	32



APPENDIX D

W.O.N. Ministry

INTRODUCTION VIDEO

SECTION 1: Introduction

1. This handbook is designed to help you create and manage a local charity in your local area called W.O.N. ministries, 'winning your neighborhood.'
2. This handbook will need to be reviewed by your local leadership team and adjustments made accordingly to your context and location.
3. The coordinator can contact W.O.N. ministers for further information via cell at 978-850-2077 or by email at pastorgeoff@newsongs.org

W.O.N. Establishing Guidelines

First Step: Network with Church, Parachurch, and secular leaders

A vital requirement is to connect with five networks willing to engage with W.O.N. Ministries. Developing a network with established contacts, churches, and charities is recommended. A key person in the community can refer you to key holders, such as government, police, sheriff, healthcare, education, and business owners.

Second Step: Connect with a W.O.N. ministries representative

The intention of this meeting will be to explain the vision, training requirements, and financial implications and provide an opportunity to ask any questions. This meeting can be held by Zoom or in person.

Third Step: Requirements for W.O.N. ministries charity

1. Visit irs.gov
2. Go to charities and nonprofits.
3. Apply for an E.I.N. number; this is provided instantly.

4. Apply for a tax exemption status Form 501C3.
5. Open a business bank account.
6. Acquire Public Liability Insurance, recommendation: Amy at Gaudette Insurance, Tel: 508-266-6451. Liz Belanger Tel: 508-283-3250
7. Build a relationship with lawyer.
8. Develop a website, recommendation: Alex Aghjayan at alex@colosseocreative.com
9. Develop a social media footprint, e.g., TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
10. Create a business card.
11. Network development such as Full Gospel Businessmen International, Young Life, Barnabas Ministry, local government, and businesses.
12. Set up a budget template.

Fourth Step: Meeting with Police, Sheriff Department, E.M.S., and Homeless Shelters

Relationships build trust, allay reservations, and develop an awareness of the presence of W.O.N. street ministry in the community. Regular meetings with the emergency services and local authorities bring transparency and solidify the City Triangle's working. This then allows working in partnership with law enforcement departments in areas where there is a greater need.

Fifth Step: Launch W.O.N. ministries

This meeting should be held at least two months before the commencement of training; a recommended venue is a government building such as the Town/City Hall. This is an opportunity to invite local press and media, churches, ministries, government organizations, non- profits, and educational institutions to be aware of W.O.N. ministries and how each can interact.

Sixth Step: Training

Training will be provided by W.O.N. ministries and will cover subjects such as:

Quality

Concern for others

Build bridges

Listen and not preach

Earn the right to introduce Jesus Operate without prejudice

Personal

Good timing skills

Reliable

Work alongside others

Respect and value people

Confidentiality

Good listener

Police background check

Spiritual

Vision for the wellbeing

Help them with resources

Knowledgeable about the community

Value the people

Work in partnership with the Police and local government

Relationship builder

Develop a network of relationships

Preparing for the Streets

Initial training: 4 two hourly sessions conducted by a W.O.N. leader

Ongoing training on-site with a W.O.N. leader available if needed

Once a month commitment is expected

Uniform and I.D. cards required; cost covered by volunteer Supplies and resources

APPENDIX E

Street Pastors Northern Ireland



APPENDIX F
Recovery Cafe



APPENDIX G
Unitas Building

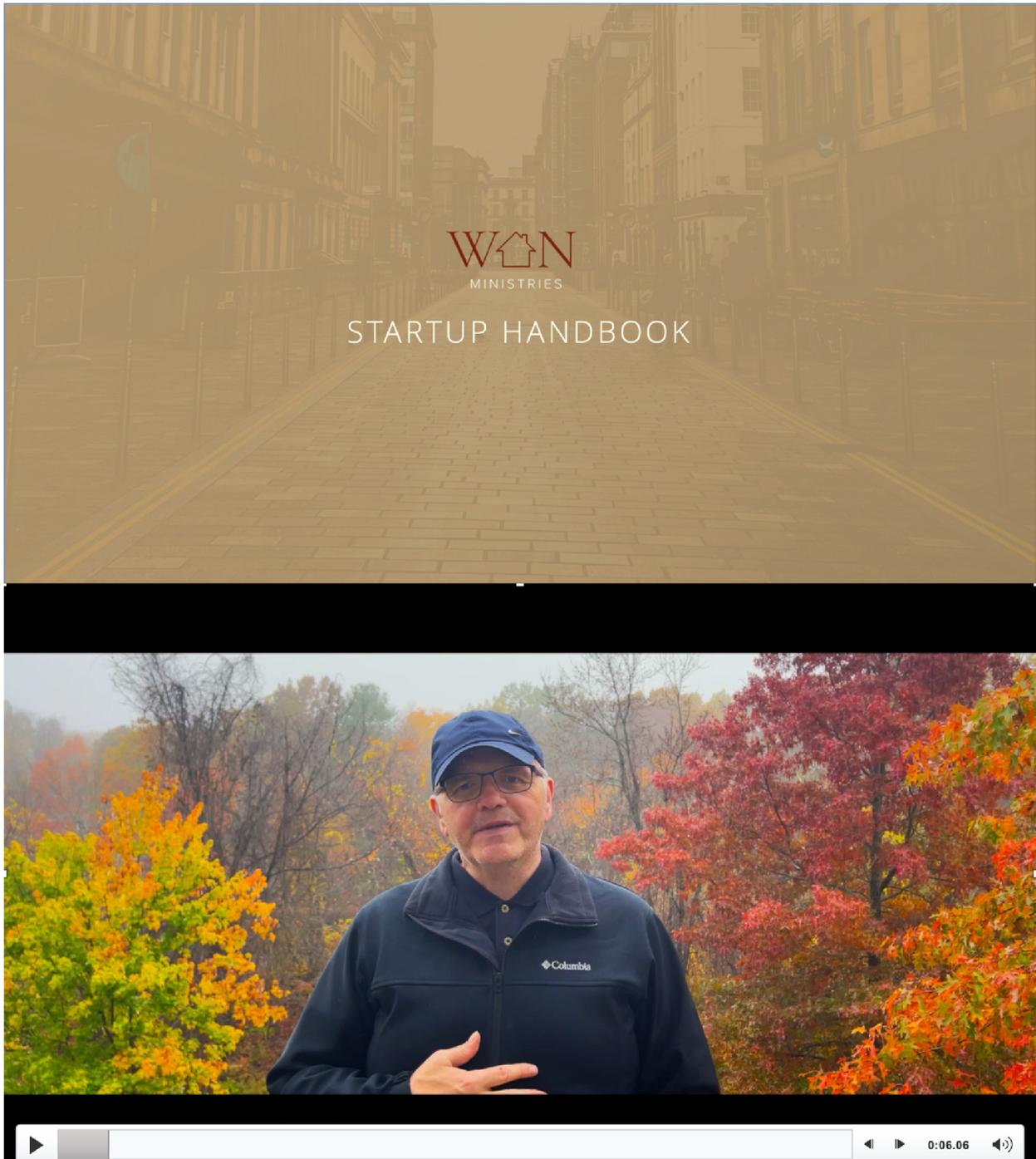


APPENDIX H
Sleeping Pod



APPENDIX I

<https://youtu.be/78z-75d3cB8>



WINNING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Introduction

1. W.O.N. ministries, short for 'Winning Our Neighborhood' is an organization built on bringing the gospel to those who need it in our local communities.
2. This handbook is a guide to help you create and manage a local W.O.N. charity in your area.
3. This handbook will need to be reviewed by your local leadership team and adjustments made accordingly to your context and location.
4. For further information, contact W.O.N. ministries via cell at 978-850-2077 or by email at pastorgeoff@newsongs.org

WON
MINISTRIES



WINNING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Establishing Guidelines: Part 1

Network with Church, Parachurch, and Secular leaders

A vital requirement is to connect with five networks willing to engage with W.O.N. Ministries. Developing a network with established contacts, churches, and charities is recommended. A key person in the community can refer you to key holders, such as government, police, sheriff, healthcare, education, and business owners.

WON
MINISTRIES

WINNING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Establishing Guidelines: Part 2

Connect with a W.O.N. ministries representative

The intention of this meeting will be to explain the vision, training requirements, and financial implications and provide an opportunity to ask any questions. This meeting can be held by Zoom or in person.



WINNING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Establishing Guidelines: Part 3

Requirements for W.O.N. ministries charity

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
ESTABLISH TAX STATUS	OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT	SETUP LEGAL PROTECTION	CREATE MARKETING MATERIAL	DEVELOP NETWORK
Visit IRS.gov and apply for E.I.N number and tax exemption status.	It is also a good time to start establishing a budget for your business.	Acquire public liability insurance and develop a relationship with a lawyer.	Develop a brand, website, social media footprint, and business cards.	Develop relationships with your local government, Full Gospel Businessmen International, Young Life, and Barnabas Ministry to name a few.
		<small>RECOMMENDATION</small> Amy at Gaudette Insurance	<small>RECOMMENDATION</small> Alex at Colosseo Creative	





WINNING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Establishing Guidelines: Part 4

Meeting with Police, Sheriff Department, E.M.S., and Homeless Shelters

Relationships build trust, allay reservations, and develop an awareness of the presence of W.O.N. street ministry in the community. Regular meetings with the emergency services and local authorities bring transparency and solidify the City Triangle's working. This then allows working in partnership with law enforcement departments in areas where there is a greater need



WINNING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Establishing Guidelines: Part 5

Launch your W.O.N. ministry!

This meeting should be held at least two months before the commencement of training; a recommended venue is a government building such as the Town/City Hall. This is an opportunity to invite local press and media, churches, ministries, government organizations, non-profits, and educational institutions to be aware of W.O.N. ministries and how each can interact.



WINNING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Establishing Guidelines: Part 6

Training sessions will cover subjects such as:

Personal

- Good timing skills
- Reliable
- Work alongside others
- Respect and value People
- Confidentiality
- Good listener
- Police background check

Quality

- Concern for others
- Build bridges
- Listen and not preach
- Earn the right to introduce Jesus
- Operate without prejudice

Preparing for the Streets

Initial training: 4 two hourly sessions conducted by a W.O.N. leader
Ongoing training on-site with a W.O.N. leader available if needed
Once a month commitment is expected

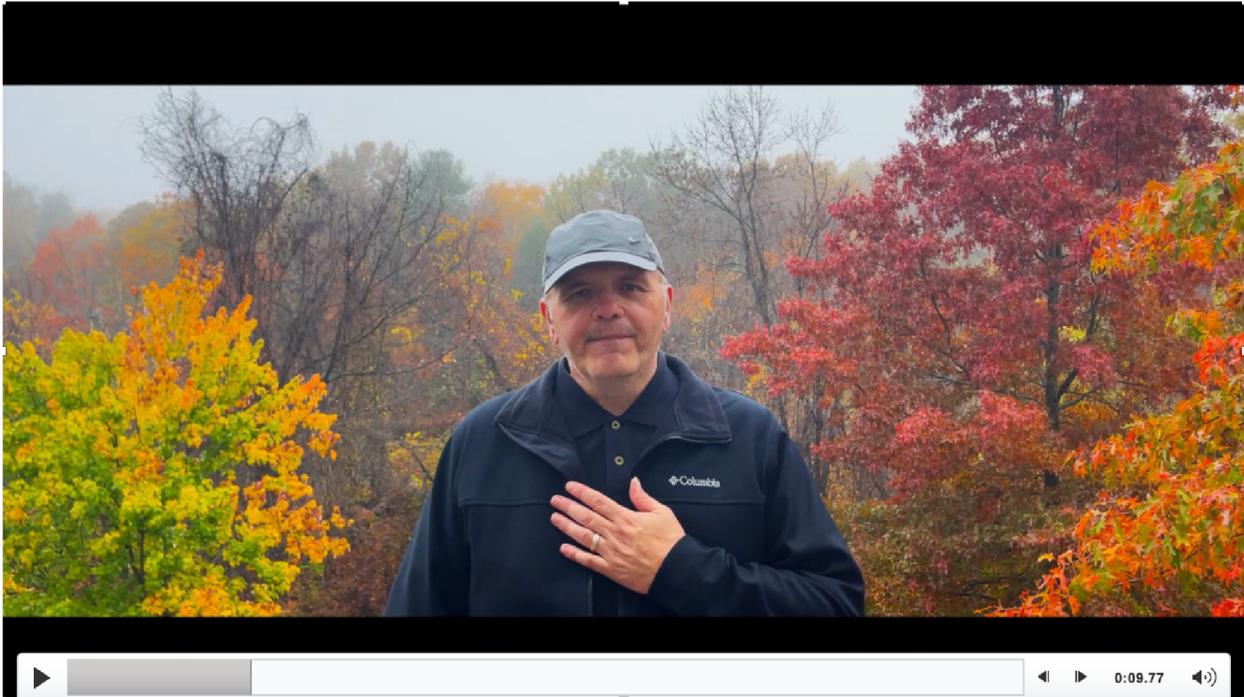
Uniform and I.D. cards required; cost covered by volunteer
Supplies and resources

Spiritual

- Passion for Jesus
- Vision for the well being
- Help them with resources
- Knowledgeable about the community
- Value the people
- Partner with the Police and local government

Relationship Builder

Develop a network of relationships





Contact Us For More Information



978-850-2077



pastorgeoff@newsongs.org