strategic options discussed in this chapter were selected by the churches that participated and successfully developed. Key tools used in the project included a planning process, a consulting process entitled "Workshop for Mission," and the organization of an urban institute as recommended by Dr. Gottfried Oosterwal.* The institute provided expert information and assistance from sociologists, educators, psychologists and health professionals. The first 18 months of the project were devoted entirely to awareness activities necessary to gain the trust and support of church members. The consulting was done during a period of 30 months.

What were the results of the project? There are at least three ways to answer this question. It could be answered in terms of soul-winning and church growth, or in terms of the attitudinal response of church members, or in terms of the impact made on the city. All three kinds of data will be presented here.

Because the project worked entirely through local churches and made no attempt to baptize anyone separately, the official reports to conference administrators included no mention of the project itself and were always made in the names of local pastors. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to say with accuracy how many baptisms came directly from the project. A better way to get a view of the evangelistic impact of the project is to look at the overall growth rate of the churches involved. Figure I shows the total membership of all Seventh-day Adventist congregations in the Greater Boston area during the decade in question. The years of the project are marked off so that a comparison can be made. The rate of growth for Boston churches during the four years just prior to the project was 12%. During the four years of the project it was 23%. This means that the project served to double the rate at which Boston churches were

growing. Figure II makes a more specific comparison between four local churches that elected not to participate in the planning/consulting process and five churches that participated fully. The participating churches had a growth rate about double that of the non-participating churches. The Boston project certainly demonstrates that consulting with city churches to help them establish strategic plans and mobilize their members for ministry to unreached people will result in growth. I know of no similar study to which to compare the evangelistic productivity of this project.

To get a more specific evaluation of the Boston project, 55 church members were interviewed. Of these, 29 had been involved in the project, and the other 26 had never been involved in any way, but were congregational leaders interviewed for purposes of comparison. Of the 55 people interviewed, 64% were white, 31% were black and 5% were from other racial backgrounds; 52% were members of suburban churches and 48% were members of urban churches.

While a greater number of the non-involved members indicated that "there are persons who because of my work and prayers have joined the S.D.A. Church as baptized members" (46% as compared to 34%), almost twice as many of the involved members indicated that they had interested persons either presently attending church or preparing for baptism at the time of the interview (38% as compared to 23%). When asked about their activity in evangelistic outreach, 41% of the project participants indicated they were active while only 31% of the other church members were. Involvement in Adventist community service activities showed an even greater difference – 24% of the project participants said they were involved in community service, while only 4% of the other church members said they were involved in community service. Almost equal numbers of project participants and non-participants indicated they held a church office (55% and 50%).
Figure II
COMPARATIVE RATES OF CHURCH GROWTH
FOR
PARTICIPATING AND NON-PARTICIPATING CHURCHES
1971-76

30% •

25% •

20% •

15% •

10% •

5% •

0% •

Church Growth Rate for 1971-76 for Four Local Churches that DID NOT Participate in the Boston Urban Ministries Program Strategy.

Church Growth Rate for 1971-76 for Five Local Churches that Did Participate Fully in the Boston Urban Ministries Program Strategy.
In rating their own spirituality, the non-participating church members were more likely to call themselves "strong" church members, but the participants were more likely to call themselves "active" church members. Almost three times as many of the non-participating members were willing to label themselves as "average" or "lukewarm" church members. Of those involved in the project, 79% said that it had helped to strengthen their spiritual lives; 72% said it had helped to make them more active in witnessing; 69% said it had helped to make them more effective in their witness; 55% felt that it had helped to make them more spontaneous in witnessing. Only 14% of the project participants answered these questions negatively.

About two thirds of those who participated, felt that the Boston project had measurably assisted the growth of their local church. When given a list of specific activities of the project and asked to indicate which were most meaningful to the church in its missionary program, 55% selected the "model" entry events; 41% selected the workshops, retreats and training events; and 34% selected the support groups. When asked about programs of the denomination outside the project that could, in their opinion, be strengthened or improved, 52% of the project participants said "lay training programs" and "the fellowship of believers," while only 25% of the other church members expressed the same concerns.

The project appears to have involved increasing numbers of church members as it continued; 17% of the participants indicated that they had been involved for four years or longer, while 45% said they had become involved in the last two or three years, and 14% said they had been involved for less than a year. The project also appears to have involved a much larger share of recent converts than church members of longer tenure. More than 48% of the project participants said they had been baptized for less than 20 years, while only 23% of the other church members were in this category. It seems that the project also did a good job of
involving Adventists from religious backgrounds other than those from which the Adventist Church usually wins converts. Those who were Catholics, Baptists or members of fundamentalist churches before they became Adventists included only 23% of the participants, but accounted for 46% of the other church members. More than 36% of the participants had come from liberal Protestant or unchurched backgrounds, while only 20% of the other church members shared this background.

From this data it is clear that those laymen and pastors who participated in the Boston project felt that it was successful in bringing growth and renewal to their churches, but what about the impact on the city outside the church? During the four years of the project, community services were provided to at least 40,000 individuals. Nearly 1,000 children and youth attended tutorial programs, summer day camps, Big Brother clubs, and Vacation Bible Schools. About 2,000 adults were screened at health fairs and through van ministry. A little over 600 people enrolled in health seminars. A thousand elderly poor were assisted with food and social services. Some 500 prisoners were visited by 25 lay prison counselors. Even if the success of the project were to be measured only by how much community outreach it generated, there is ample evidence that it did quite well.

Whether one looks at the project in terms of its impact on the larger community, or its impact on the renewal of churches, or its results in creating accessions to church membership, it appears that it was successful. The Boston project certainly demonstrates that urban churches can be helped to achieve greater growth and health through the intervention of a consulting process. Strategic planning can lead to greater evangelistic results. Small groups can be effective mediums of church revitalization and growth. Church planting is a viable concept for Adventists to use in the city. Future projects are needed to test these findings.
CHAPTER THREE
CONCLUSIONS: A STRATEGY FOR THE LARGE CITIES

If the large metropolitan areas are to be reached with the gospel, this study indicates that certain ingredients will be a necessary part of the strategy. The focus of the strategy will be the local church. Growing urban churches are congregations with (1) a clear sense of mission which a large percentage of the members personally own; (2) the ability to attract educated, younger adults; (3) a solid program of community service in which the members are involved; and (4) the ability to assimilate new members from diverse backgrounds and equip them to witness to the unchurched.

What methods of ministry are most effective in attaining these characteristics in an urban church? What kind of support mechanisms can the denomination use to most effectively encourage urban churches to attain these characteristics? Four ministry tools and two support activities will be discussed here in some detail because, among all the current suggestions, they appear to be the most effective means at hand.

Small Groups

Goals ownership, a highly spiritual soul-winning emphasis, involvement in community service, training for witnessing, and the assimilation of new members can best be accomplished in a congregation through small groups. It does not matter if they are called house churches, cottage meetings, mission groups, or Home Bible Fellowships; small groups are essential to urban church growth and evangelism. This is true of both internal and external factors influencing the city church. The typical Adventist congregation has what church growth experts call a
"single cell" fellowship. That is to say that there is essentially one grouping of people involved in lay activities and fellowship in a congregation. In smaller and medium-size suburban and small town churches, and especially in rural churches, this presents no difficulty because the community which the church is trying to win often has a single culture. As new people come into the church they find it relatively easy to feel right at home. In city churches there is much variety in the kinds of people because the urban environment is multi-cultural. A number of different fellowship "cells" are needed within a city church just to hold the existing members. In turn, a variety of different lay ministry programs are required in order to reach the vast mosaic of people groups in the city.

Small groups can also serve to overcome some of the secular, anti-religious attitudes present among city people. The informality of small groups, their flexibility and mobility are all assets in reaching the city. Small groups tend to put emphasis on people instead of institutions or buildings, and in that way they can overcome the anxiety that many urban people feel about "organized religion."

There are elements that determine the success or failure of a small group strategy, and these must be taken into consideration. Not all approaches to small groups will be successful. In fact, many of the early attempts at small group work may have tended to discredit this strategy among some Adventist clergy. Small groups need a richness of fellowship so that "friendship evangelism" is generated. At the same time, they must not become so self-absorbed that they lose sight of the outside world and move off into such aberrations as sensitivity training or deviant theologies. Small groups must include Bible study as a regular part of their activity so that potential and newly baptized members are grounded in the Word of God and so that they keep everything Bible-based. At the same time, there is a need to guard against becoming just a study group where abstract thinking is the focus and the application of Bible principles in everyday life is
ignored. It is usually in groups with a completely abstract focus that doctrinal abberations come about.

There are two proven tools for keeping small groups on the right track. First, adequate training and preparation must be given to group leaders and the church members who participate in small groups. Second, small groups must remain mission-centered through a requirement that each have a definite outreach of its own design in which it is regularly investing time and money.

In the February 1975 issue of *Ministry*, Robert Spangler reviews a program initiated by Southern Baptists which they call "Target-Group Evangelism." This program illustrates how a proper and effective small group strategy can be mobilized. One illustration of how target-group evangelism might work in the Adventist Church can be seen in a mission group called around a literature evangelist. A group of five to twelve lay people would covenant to be a support team for the literature evangelist and meet with him or her twice a month to hear him share his successes and failures. The group would join him in prayer, help conduct a group Bible study for his contacts, and might help get publicity for him in the local media. There are many, many other ways in which lay witness groups can reach out into the large cities.* The mobilization of hundreds of such groups is needed in each of the large metropolitan areas of the world. This would form the grass roots base for a successful urban mission.

Adventist churches in the great urban centers must become what are sometimes called "base churches" — congregations which become a base of operations for a wide range of small groups and lay ministries. A "base church" is a church that constantly feeds and supports outreach projects, and welcomes and cares for the new converts as they are brought in. It is a church that thrives on

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*I have given a number of additional examples in "What You Can Do in the City," *Insight*, October 30, 1979, pp 3-7.
a variety of kinds of people, making room for each new kind of lifestyle and for each set of needs. It is a congregation honeycombed with many different kinds of fellowship cells and activity groups. Ellen White envisioned this concept, and in one of her most detailed descriptions of what she saw as the model of a successful, growing city church, she called it a "beehive" of activity.*

The business of turning declining churches into strong, active churches is difficult and problematic. Few Adventist pastors have been trained in the concepts and techniques of church renewal, and often there is not strong support from conference administrators for the changes that need to be made in order to bring about renewal. Perhaps a feasible way to begin church renewal in a city is for one particular congregation to be sought as a "volunteer" to become the base church for urban ministry, and to concentrate on renewing and building up that congregation, leaving the others to become "havens" for those church members who are not comfortable with the emphasis on small groups. This base church could become the sponsor for church-planting projects, and over a period of a decade or two the entire picture of church life in that metropolitan area might be changed with a minimum of conflict.

The urban evangelistic activity of the Adventist Church is at present heavily invested in public meetings and media ministries. The need to develop a strategy of small-group evangelism, which will involve church members in personal soul-winning through community service outreach and help to better assimilate new converts, ought not to be seen as a replacement for the existing efforts. In fact to "wipe the slate clean" and begin again to build a new strategy would result in enormous dislocation and loss. Rather, it is important to find ways to integrate a new emphasis on small groups with the conventional approach so that they interact

with each other in a supportive way. Media programs and public meetings can be fine-tuned to enhance and benefit from the newly emerging small group ministries.

**Media**

Soul-winning success through the involvement of church members in community service can be facilitated with the strategic use of the mass media. Random, unrelated witnessing activities can easily be lost in the massive scale of a large city. On the other hand, marketing tools available today can enable personal communication with mass audiences. An illustration of the possibilities can be seen in the way a psychologist with a radio talk show becomes the trusted advisor of tens of thousands of people, or a grandmother in a television commercial for hamburgers becomes a household name.

The Adventist Church is not presently near the potential of media ministry in the cities. The primary lack is in strategy, not products. When a major advertising campaign is launched to sell soap, ten to fifty times as much air time is used as in Adventist broadcast evangelism. This air time is purchased with very sophisticated targeting to specific audiences, using the array of demographic data that is available. A properly targeted media campaign is essential to evangelistic success in the large cities not only because it will bring people into meetings and programs, but also because it lends credibility to the overall institutional image, or "positioning," of the church.

Saturation use of radio and television to build public awareness in a city will include both spot announcements and longer programs on a regular, year-round basis. It also will include locally-produced elements as well as national broadcasts. In every major metropolitan area, all of the nationwide Adventist radio and television ministries should be on the air; each targeted to the unique people group that it reaches. The local programs should be targeted toward the kinds of people that are not being reached by the national programs.
For example, a weekly 30-minute television program could be produced, featuring a local pastor and a physician as the hosts. The topics could be tied to themes suggested in the health ministries of the local churches. Three to five minutes of documentary film could be used to grab viewer attention at the beginning of each show. The rest of the program might be an informal dialogue with a small studio audience. This kind of program could regularly publicize the seminars and small group activities of local churches, and names of interested persons could be gathered by offers of free information. Included might be the advertising of regular Bible study classes throughout the city. This kind of programming could be produced with local talent available in many cities, and might be accepted as a public service (at no cost) on some stations or sponsored by an Adventist Health System institution. Both radio and television broadcasts of this type have been tried successfully in New York and Vancouver.

The potential of spot programming (30-second or 60-second messages) has been ignored by Adventist media ministries until recently. In the large cities more money would be well invested in Adventist Awareness spots than in longer programs. It is the peculiar nature of fast-paced urban life that the majority of the people can never be reached by religious programming of five, fifteen or thirty minutes duration. Less than three per cent of the American population is being reached by traditional religious broadcasts, and one of the major reasons is simply program length.* Spot programming can be targeted toward specific audiences with greater precision than longer programming, although the need for sophisticated planning is also greater than with conventional forms of media ministry.

*James F. Engel cited this research during the Church Growth Seminar at Andrews University, August 1-5, 1981. It was also reported in a publication distributed to denominational workers by Faith For Today in the spring of 1981.
A principle of mass communication that needs to be more fully understood and used more widely by the church is tied up in the difference between what is called "institutional" advertising and "product" advertising. As applied to media evangelism, this concept means that spot ads need to be used to "sell" an awareness of the Adventist Church, as well as to present information about a specific series of meetings or a particular service or piece of literature available to the public. The advertising industry has come to realize that the best sales results come from using both kinds at the same time. A good example of this can be seen in the advertising strategy of the McDonalds Corporation. Some television spots sell McDonalds restaurants as nice, friendly places that care about people. Other spots sell the food items themselves. Adventist urban mission needs the same kind of mixed media strategy tied to its caring churches and the specific services offered by its members.

An effective media strategy will also be long-term. The real pay-off from advertising does not come in a few weeks, but after the residual build-up of years of continuous usage, with regular up-dating of presentations, but one or two constant images that are etched into the subconscious of the mass audience. One place where that has begun to occur for the Adventist Church is New York City, where such a strategy has been used by the van ministry for nearly a decade, and a real impact on the church growth rate can now be measured.

Print media also need to be a part of a total media outreach in the urban areas. Consistent and well-designed direct mail advertising is perhaps the least expensive way to contact new people for the first time and to bring initial contacts to entry events and on into pathways to church membership. Direct mail could also be used to build the audience for broadcast ministries, to sell Adventist books, and to enroll people in Bible correspondence courses. For example, a monthly newspaper could be circulated to target zip codes or blocks within a
metropolitan area. Mail order sale of paperback missionary books, and advertising from the publishing department, Adventist Book Centers, and other institutions might help pay for the publication. Each issue might advertise the most current public seminars being presented in the city. Included could be stories about individuals helped by community service ministries, as well as presentations of the worship, Bible study, small groups, Christian education and youth activities of the churches.

**Public Seminars**

Public meetings can still be a key element in reaching the cities. A strategy of public meetings that takes into consideration what the data demonstrate concerning the importance of involving church members in community service and properly assimilating new converts will not only function as a "reaping" mechanism but also serve to contact many people for the first time. Such a strategy is not at odds with an emphasis on small groups. In fact, a regular cycle of large group meetings is supported by and supportive of a strong program of small groups. They can function in a dynamic way, feeding each other while caring for the audiences that both serve separately. Seminars are an appropriate format for public meetings today because they utilize a style widely known to unchurched people from business and schooling, and because they partake of some of the elements of small group dynamics. The most effective public seminars have an attendance of 25 to 50.*

Recent experimentation demonstrates that if this strategy includes a balanced schedule of health, mental health and religious topics there are enhanced results, reaching a wide variety of people. Concerned Communications has developed, and field-tested in more than 2,000 local churches, a type of seminar that illustrates

this concept, using the nomenclature "felt-needs sequence evangelism."* Previous and current failures with "health evangelism" stem largely from a strategy that leaps from physical needs all the way to spiritual needs; a distance too great for people to follow. The sequencing of needs allows for a natural progression from physical needs, to emotional needs, to spiritual needs. A "bridging" step has been supplied with the stress clinic and related types of family life seminars, and there are many other possibilities to be explored.

Successful use of public meetings in urban ministry will include a regular, yearly cycle in each city church. During the first quarter of each cycle (not necessarily the first quarter of the calendar year), a health screening and education series will be presented: a health fair or "Heartbeat" program, nutrition class, Five-day Plan, etc.** During the second quarter of each cycle, a seminar in the "bridge" or mental health category will be presented: stress management, family life, grief recovery, etc. During the third quarter of the cycle a pre-evangelism seminar will be presented such as the Daniel Seminar. During the last quarter a Revelation Seminar or other full-message series will be presented.

The cycle will begin again in the first quarter of the new program year. Entry to the people flow in this cycle will occur at each stage, as those are reached who are at that point in their felt needs. Some people will come for the first time during the doctrinal meetings, and for them the rest of the cycle will serve as a process of nurture to strengthen them in the Adventist life-style. Others of a more secular orientation will come for the first time during the phases

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*A number of publications describing this concept are available from Concerned Communications, Highway 59 North, Siloam Springs, Arkansas 72761.

**A packet of information describing how to conduct the "Heartbeat" community coronary risk evaluation program can be obtained from the School of Health, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California 92354.
where the emphasis is on physical or emotional needs, and be introduced to spiritual concepts. Of course there will be dropouts all along the way, but the total effect will be a more consistent accession pattern and a greater rate of real growth in discipling.

Smaller churches will implement this strategy on a smaller scale than larger churches, but it has been demonstrated that no church is too small to carry on this kind of an annual public program within the constraints of current funding policies of the North American Division. Larger churches may implement more than one cycle a year. Two or more cycles could be run simultaneously in two or more sections of the community. It is essential that in each case an equal amount of public advertising be given to each phase of the cycle and that key sessions of the seminars in each phase be conducted outside the church building.

Bible Study Centers

If an emphasis on soul-winning and regular opportunities for training of church members in the skills of personal ministry are to emerge in the large cities it will be necessary to greatly increase the number of Bible studies being conducted there by pastors and Bible workers. The most efficient strategy yet devised to accomplish this is the Bible Study Center concept demonstrated by Don Gray in Chicago.* Actually this is a very old idea. The original "city missions" operated by Adventists prior to the era of "medical missionary evangelism" were of the same design. Community service, small group and other ministries in an urban area would all feed people into these centers, and here pastors would be able to study with twenty, thirty and even forty people a day without the problems and costs associated with doing these studies individually in homes. This concept makes it

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possible to get to people who live in apartment complexes and behind security doors.

A center could operate from a rented conference room one day each week. Four sessions could be offered; morning, lunch hour, afternoon and evening. Revelation seminars or Bible-marking materials could be used in an informal setting. Centers could be located in a strategic pattern across a metropolitan area in meeting rooms in well-known hotels, and downtown, perhaps in a YMCA or YWCA facility. Each center might operate on a different day of the week to provide schedule coverage as well as geographic coverage. In addition to feeder patterns from small groups and community service ministries, people could be brought to the centers through modest advertising and telephone contacts made with respondents to media ministries. If each of the Adventist pastoral staff members located in a metropolitan area were to spend one day a week in this work, the number of Bible studies and baptisms could be increased several times over within a year. In addition, the centers would put in place the kind of opportunities needed to provide to church members good training and coaching in the skills of personal evangelism. Although the cost would be within the range that local churches can fund, it would undoubtedly be a worthwhile investment for any local conference that chose to provide seed money for Bible Study Centers.

Metro Ministry Coordinator

The Adventist Church can never mount a serious effort to reach the urban areas until it develops urban ministry specialists and invests in adequate staffing for each of the major cities. This is essential because so few pastors have specialized training in urban ministry. The building of an effective urban ministry is a long-term task, but pastors tend to stay in city churches for relatively short periods and there is high turnover among church members too. Therefore the continuity of a central coordinating office is vital in each city. Effectively
reaching the cities is also a very complex task, calling for the cooperation of all of the local churches in a metropolitan area and for the planting of new churches. Because of the organizational loyalty that is necessarily a trait of each local pastor and congregation, the total task will not be addressed unless there is a coordinator that stands outside any specific local congregation and speaks for the total mission of the church. A metro ministry coordinator can also provide the consultant skills necessary to enable a high level of goal ownership in local congregations.

Our city churches are, by and large, not prospering. Especially in the large metropolexes in the northeastern United States, non-ethnic Adventist congregations are not growing. A simple measurement of the health of these congregations, as suggested by C. Peter Wagner's model for church pathology indicates why there is no growth.* A great number of the "white" churches in the large cities have a good case of what Wagner calls "St. John's Syndrome." That is, they are made up largely of third and fourth generation descendants of the founders and early converts of that local church. These people are usually middle-aged and older, and have little motivation or capacity to do more than survive. Added to this, in many cases, is a second condition that Wagner calls "People Blindness." Often eighty percent of the congregation commute from the suburbs to attend a city church and are completely out of touch with the local population in the neighborhood where the church building is located. They do not see the differences in culture, demographics, and needs that exist between the suburban communities where they live and the church's ministry area. Therefore when outreach projects are planned by the local church, these projects usually fail.**

*Wagner, C. Peter, Your Church Can Be Healthy (1979, Abingdon, Nashville).

**One of the ten most important factors in church growth is "thorough study of the local community." See Dudley & Cummings, 1981, pp 64-65.
In some congregations these conditions have continued for so many years that yet a third "disease" has set in to complicate the situation even further. These congregations have what Wagner calls "Koinonitis." They have "inflamed fellowship patterns," with a very in-grown set of relationships that make it difficult for new members to become assimilated into the congregation. This is especially true if these new members are converts from an unchurched background or a different life-style than that of the established members, but it is true even for Adventists transferring in from out of town. During my ministry in northeastern cities, I have had occasion to visit with a large number of Adventists who moved in from the south or west because of jobs or to get advanced education, and in many of these cases they dropped out of church participation and did not seek to transfer their membership, because they perceived themselves as not fitting into the congregation. When a congregation gets to this point of "ill health" many of its members become outspokenly resistant to any kind of evangelism. In my discussions with city pastors from other regions, I am told that this is not an isolated situation but one that is present in many urban congregations.

All of this argues for the need of a real program of church renewal among urban congregations. Significant lay witnessing is not going to be a reality unless there is a change of attitude and priorities on the part of these city congregations. In fact, no amount of increased effectiveness in urban evangelism will result in church growth if there is not a renewal of city congregations. When new converts are won it is essential that there be receptive, nurturing churches for them to establish membership in. The necessary degree of church renewal will not become a reality with "business as usual" in the denomination. It needs special staffing resources.
For maximum effectiveness a metro area coordinating team would include four people:

1. A director who has consultant skills and is capable of dealing with research, program development, and strategy.

2. A Bible worker who can serve as the interest coordinator for the entire city and as a witnessing trainer for the local churches.

3. An associate director who has skills in the areas of health and community service ministry, as well as some training in marketing and media relations.

4. An experienced administrative secretary who is bilingual.

All of the available evidence from church growth research suggests that the Adventist urban mission would gain much more from this kind of staffing pattern than from expanding the pastoral staffs of large city churches, especially in the suburbs. These pastoral staffers become focused professionally and functionally on maintenance. A metro ministry staff would be focused on mission. Would it be a "doable" goal to have such a team established in each city of more than one million population by the end of this century?

**Continued Research**

It is essential that there be careful, consistent research in each major metropolitan area before a new thrust of evangelism and church growth begins there. The complex dynamics of urbanization are not well understood by a large number of Adventist workers, even many of those who are committed to city work. No strategy can be effective in reaching a city unless insight is first gained to its mosaic of people groups, cultural values and social dynamics. This involves more than demographics. An adequate data base for a given metropolitan area would include:
1. Identifying the people groups and life-style clusters within the city, and the character of each unit in terms of its values, socio-economic structure, geographic location, etc.

2. Surveying the Adventist membership to find out which people groups have been penetrated by Adventists, how the membership came to join the church, and other local patterns of church growth.*

3. Evaluating the Adventist churches as to their health, growth patterns, and readiness for a stronger mission emphasis.**

4. Collecting available research on the religious patterns, church membership in all denominations, and general values of the population.***

5. Having conversations with key leaders in the various neighborhoods to determine what kinds of programs already exist so that Adventist community service outreaches are not seen as duplication.

6. Visiting each of the neighborhoods to observe the patterns, needs, and opportunities that will indicate the kinds of approaches which will work best in that community.

This information will not be of any use unless it is also displayed in graphics that pastors and lay leaders can quickly understand and use. These graphics should

*The Institute of Church Ministry has developed three basic survey tools that can be used in collecting this information. These surveys are designed for church members, new members, and pastors.

**An excellent tool that can be used is Evaluative Criteria for the Pennsylvania Academy of Seventh-day Adventist Churches by Lawrence Downing. Available from the Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 720 Musuem Road, Reading, Pennsylvania 19611.

be designed not only to present facts, but to call forth the commitment of the people to the great task of reaching the city.

Amateur attempts in this area of research will not lend strength to these efforts. Dr. Gottfried Oosterwal, director of the Institute of World Mission, has proposed the establishment of urban institutes to carry on this work. The proper staff working from such an institute could prepare high-quality research and interpret it in a professional manner. This kind of consulting service could serve to initiate effective strategies for urban ministry in many areas. The staff of the institute could also monitor experimental efforts throughout the field and communicate to church leaders and urban ministry specialists what is working and what is not working. Such an institute would not need to be very expensive because it does not require full-time staffing. An urban institute could be operated by a small committee and arrange to borrow or pay for services from appropriate college and university faculty, pastors, denominational staffers, and qualified professionals among the laity as needed for various projects and studies. An urban institute might also sponsor a training school for pastors, evangelists and lay leaders to be attended by a select group for about ten days each year.

Conclusion

Among the actions of the 1980 General Conference Session was a call for special attention to reaching the secular and non-Christian peoples of the world, and the large cities. At the 1985 General Conference Session the president, Elder Neal C. Wilson, reaffirmed "the challenge of the cities" as a major priority of the denomination and quoted Ellen White's comments from the 1909 session: "O, that we might see the needs of these great cities as God sees them. It is distressing that they have been neglected so long."

At the same time it seems that there is little activity by Adventists in the field of urban ministry. The denomination seems to be engaged in a massive withdrawal from the cities. The Inner City Program which started in the late 1960's seems to be in decline, and it has been defined almost exclusively as a black ministry. There is less funding for urban mission than there has been at any time since 1970. The seminary is no longer conducting urban ministry field schools as it did in the past. The New York Center has been sold. A.Y. Taskforce projects are no longer conducted in the area of urban ministry. The moving of churches to the suburbs continues, a trend now joined by black and Hispanic congregations. Very few pastors of city churches actually live in urban neighborhoods, and there is a continued reduction of pastoral staffing assigned to city congregations. If the Adventist Church does not begin to reach the large cities, then it is not serious about the task of reaching "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" with the three angels' messages.