


# Missiological implications of Paul's mission strategies and lessons for urban missionaries

**Author:**Akinyemi O. Alawode<sup>1</sup> **Affiliation:**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology, College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

**Corresponding author:**

Akinyemi Alawode,  
aalawode@nbts.edu.ng

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The terms 'mission,' 'missions' and 'missionary' within the Christian context are often associated with the goal of Christianising remote or rural areas. Many reports from mission fields are characterised by events and issues that highlight the needs of rural churches or missions. Some missionaries, particularly in Africa, argue that missionary work is misplaced in urban settings. It is intriguing, therefore, that one of the foremost missionaries of biblical times, the Apostle Paul, exemplifies urban missions. This article examined the personality of the Apostle Paul, his mission expeditions, the strategies and impacts of his journeys and the lessons for urban church planters. The author employed a descriptive research method and concluded, 'The life and ministry of Paul, as documented in the Bible, could be called a manual for urban mission agencies and missionaries. His call, character and commitment are his most potent strategies for fulfilling the Great Commission'.

**Contribution:** The article contributes to the field of missiology by suggesting that missionaries and mission practitioners should emulate Paul's life and ministry to achieve successful urban mission work.

**Keywords:** urban missionaries; mission expeditions; mission agencies; Great Commission; salvation; Christianity.

## Introduction

Apostle Paul's ministry was primarily domiciled in city centres, as documented in the Book of Acts and Pauline epistles, where he employed various strategies to make Christ known to the people. His methods, practices, principles and patterns of ministry reveal a recurring strategy of making the cities his launch pad for the globalisation of Christianity in his world. He embarked on missionary journeys with many evangelical stop points at port cities, administrative headquarters and significant economic centres where people from diverse cultures and religious persuasions gathered for various businesses. He added the Gospel to their business and ensured that all his efforts culminated in establishing or strengthening churches in those major cities.

This article seeks to enumerate Paul's missionary strategies and impacts through his life and missionary journeys and draw missiological implications as lessons for urban missions. Urban missions, as used in the article, refer to strategic outreach and ministry efforts to address people's spiritual, social and physical needs in urban settings. The author employed a descriptive research method.

## Paul, the Apostle

Paul was born around 3 AD, and his education began with the rote learning system of the Mosaic order for the first 5 years, after which he was enrolled in a rabbinic school and ended it under the renowned Jewish Scholar Gamaliel. This educational background offered him a rich cultural heritage and exposure, which enabled him to speak Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek and possibly Latin. Then growing up in the city of Tarsus also imparted him politically, intellectually, morally and religiously in varying degrees because of its Greek atmosphere and culture, which is responsible for his fluency in Greek language and literature, quoting from its poets (Nwanguma 2016:93–94). Paul's pre-Christian early life reveals a man as written in his epistles (Gal 1:13–5 and Phlp 3:4–6) who had advanced in Judaism beyond many of his peers and persecuted the Church till he suddenly encountered Christ and was changed, which he described as God being pleased to reveal his son in him (Kraabel 2020:132). Ortiz (2023:7) describes him as a brilliant, pious, zealous, well-educated pharisee intimately acquainted with the scriptures, Greco-Roman history, language and culture from a wealthy and well-connected family. The formative years of Paul were reflected

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eventually in his approach to missions and the development of Christianity, mainly through his letters, which show erudition and intellectual acuity in Jewish theology and Greek philosophy prevalent at the time.

Paul's conversion and call were a single dramatic event recorded in Acts 9. He did not explicitly describe the event as a conversion but as a call in his accounts. Still, a call cannot substitute conversion, and thus, the event was a two-fold process, where he turned to Christ and was called to be an apostle to the gentile. His conversion brought about his receiving Christ's transformative power that radically redefined his life, nature and ministry. At his conversion, he accepted his religion, reinterpreted it and transformed it with grace given to him (Moe 2017:101). Saul of Tarsus, as he was known before his conversion, was living as a 'zealot pharisee' who did all he could to eradicate the new way of the Messianic preaching of the Christians till the dramatic event of his conversion on the road to Damascus changed Paul from a Jewish fanatic to an ardent follower of Christ. This encounter was described as Paul's 'Christological Encounter', which shaped his mission (Sivasubramanian 2023:3). The interwoven conversion and call event reveal God's multiple dimensions of mercies and grace, which Paul constantly alludes to as an unmerited privilege that he then reciprocates by giving his all to the dictates and demands of his call.

Furthermore, J. Kroeger (2009:227) provides a chronological synopsis of Paul's life. He states that Paul was born in Tarsus around 5-10 AD, studied in Jerusalem between 15 AD and 20 AD and converted in 36 AD. Paul lived in Damascus, Arabia and Jerusalem from 36 to 39 AD and then returned to Tarsus from 39 to 43 AD. He spent 43 to 44 AD in Antioch, followed by his first missionary journey from 44 to 48 AD. He participated in the Council of Jerusalem and confronted Peter in Antioch during 48 AD. His second missionary journey took place from 49 to 50 AD, followed by his third missionary journey from 49 to 53 AD. From 53 to 58 AD, he was a prisoner in Caesarea, and from 58 to 60 AD, he made a voyage to Rome. He likely undertook a fourth missionary journey to Spain, Rome and other places from 60 to 63 AD. Paul was imprisoned a second time in Rome from 64 to 66 AD, and he died in Rome between 67 and 68 AD. He further notes that Paul is perceived as 'the greatest missionary of all times' and referred to as an apostle to the gentiles as he spread Christianity in the Gentile world and helped the church grow through his mission efforts and theological reflection. There is no doubt that Paul's lifetime reflects his unfettered devotion to fulfilling the call he received from God. Paul's mission endeavours in the Greco-Roman world will then be examined.

## Paul's missionary expeditions

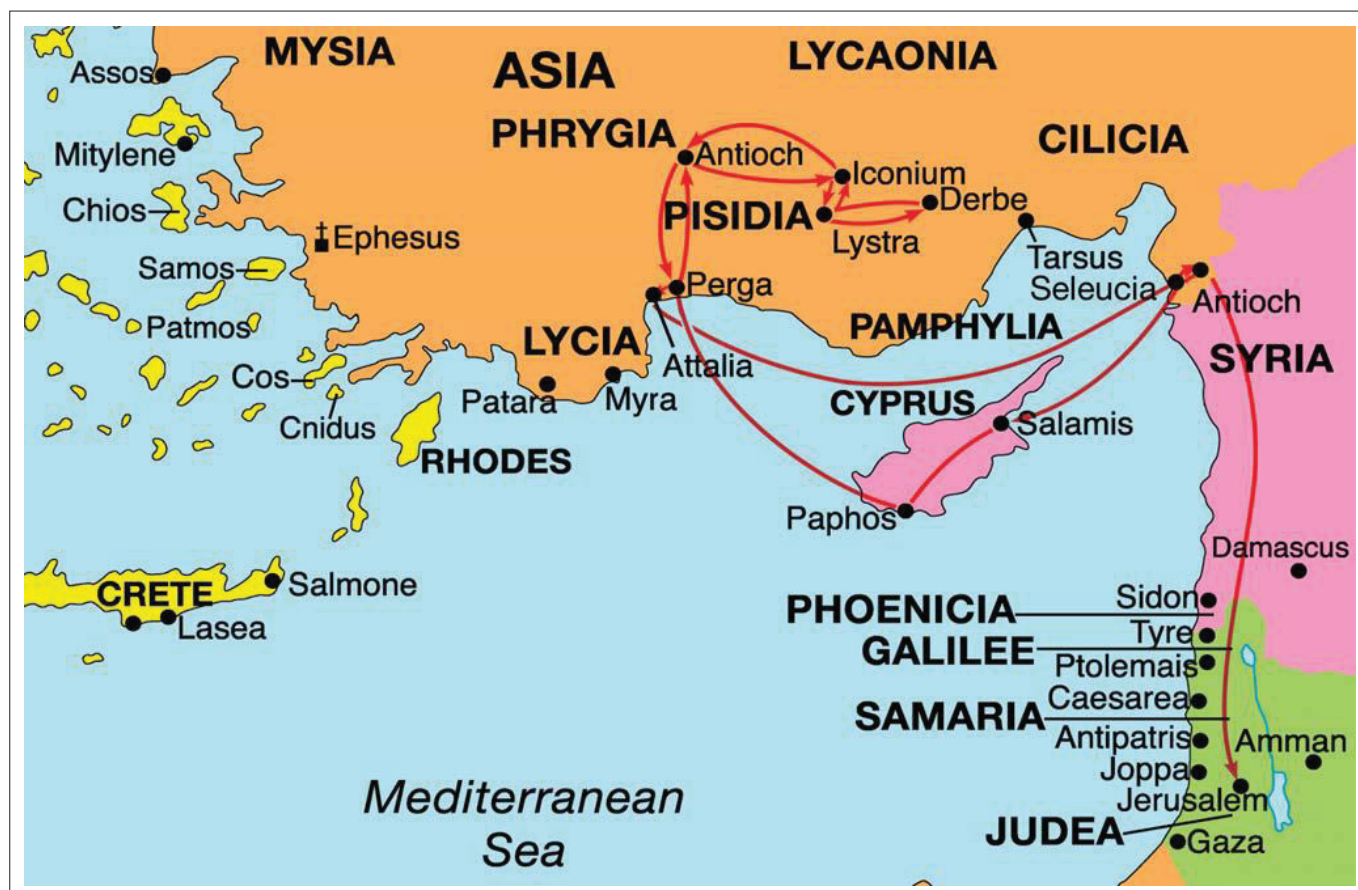
Paul could be called an itinerant missionary who moved from place to place to break new grounds for the Gospel or consolidate the existing works. Volker Rabens (2017:100) defines mission as the multidimensional engagement of an individual or faith group aimed at attracting others to embrace the message of faith and live accordingly. Paul

engaged in missions through verbal proclamations, theological discourse, ethical instruction and spiritual gift demonstration with 'reciprocal participation' in identifying with the gospel recipients' daily lives. Several propositions about the numbers, locations reached and routes taken in his missionary journeys shall be further discussed.

Nwanguma (2020) proposes seven missionary journey structures for Paul: (1) The forgotten mission to Arabia (Gal 1:16-17); (2) the non-existing mission to Jerusalem; (3) the unknown mission to Tarsus; (4) the prolonged mission in Antioch; (5) the Itinerant Mission: First journey; (6) the Independent Mission: Second journey and (7) the Final Mission: Third journey. Proponents of the four missionary journeys state that the fourth was not reflected in Acts of Apostles but in Paul's letters. Kenneth Ortiz (2023:9) notes that the fourth missionary journey is not straightforward, but it could have included his journeys to Spain, Crete, Asia, Achaia and Macedonia. There are proponents of three missionary journeys associated with Paul, which is considered customary among scholars. However, William Tabbernee (2014:47) opines that the third missionary journey was not a journey but a stopover in Ephesus. This position is known as the two missionary journeys structure in Acts. The three maps (see Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3) indicate Paul's first, second and third journey.

Furthermore, Patrick Schreiner (2020:516) affirms that Paul's last two missionary journeys' structures were legitimate according to the Book of Acts of the Apostles, as the delineation between the second and third journeys was not very clear, disputes between the breakpoint is either between Acts 18:22-23 and 18: 23-34 or no break at all were all captured. He then affirms the three missionary journeys narrative of the first missionary journey consisting of Paul and Barnabas moving from Antioch through the Asia Minor cities of Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Lystra, back to Antioch and then to Jerusalem council (Ac 13:1-15:35), second Missionary journey as consisting of Paul, Silas and Timothy moving through Macedonian and Greek cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth and returning to Antioch through Asia Minor (Ac 15:36-18:23) and the third missionary journey consisting of Paul and Apollos working in Ephesus and journeying back through Macedonia and Greece to Jerusalem (Ac 18:24-21:14). The three journeys structure narrative is considered as opening up the readings more than the binary structures proposed by some scholars. The missionary travels of Paul, as recorded in Acts and some glimpses in his letters, were the primary documentary pieces of evidence of the nature, strategies and impacts Paul made in joining others to turn the Greco-Roman world into a predominantly Christian world.

Furthermore, it is essential to examine his missionary message and methods and the theology of missions behind them as he went about preaching and winning the multitudes to the Lord. Paul understood that God's mission is universal



Source: Conforming To Jesus Ministry, n.d.a, Paul's first missionary journey map, viewed 16 November 2024, from [https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/pauls\\_first\\_journey\\_map.htm](https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/pauls_first_journey_map.htm)

FIGURE 1: Paul's first journey.

as he seeks out people to redeem them from sin and death regardless of their races or tribes and his messages centred on God reconciling the world to himself through the death and resurrection of his son, Jesus Christ. Another of Paul's understandings of God's mission is that it is apocalyptic. This understanding stemmed from his belief that Christ's death and resurrection have 'supremely revealed and restored' the victory of God over all enemies and death in the new dispensation. Therefore, Paul sees his mission as participatory in God's transformation of the present world and anticipatory in preparing believers for God's coming Kingdom through the message of Christ's death and resurrection (Moe 2017:103). For every missionary journey Paul embarked upon, his message to his hearers centres on Christ's death and resurrection and its import in God's scheme of things for humankind's salvation and eternal reign with him. He preached and nurtured believers, trained leaders and established churches with this consciousness.

## Strategies and impacts of Paul's missionary journeys

There are opinions on whether Paul's missionary strategies were intentional or circumstantial. Rabens (2017:11) interacts with the opposing views of Frey and Roland Allen (Steven Rutt 2012:16). Frey suggests that Paul focused on reaching Hellenized cities, where ports are located and also have

many Jewish diaspora communities, and that he is the only early Christian with a planned strategic mission, bringing his pre-Christian standings in background and education to bear on his missionising efforts. On the other hand, Roland Allen posits that Paul had no planned-out mission strategy from biblical records. He thus affirms that while reflecting on Paul's missionary journeys in the Book of Acts, nothing suggests that he consciously planned out a mission strategy but was flexible enough to adapt to numerous situations he faced while preaching the Gospel. Still, he identified himself as an apostle to the gentiles and a pioneer of frontier expansion of Christianity, utilising several methods suitable for bringing the gentiles to Christ (102–105). Regardless of the academic positions, what was evident in the ministry of Paul is that it was strategic and was carried out in a consistent pattern, which shows the intention and practice of strategic missions. The strategies identified will be discussed in this section.

### Paul's ministry style

Abeneazer Urga (2021) asserts that so many scholars have examined many methodologies of Paul's mission, but the pillars of his missionary methods are often overlooked, and little attention is paid to them, which are suffering and intercession. These preparatory strategies in the discussion and practice of contemporary missiologists and missionaries





Source: Conforming To Jesus Ministry, n.d.b, *Paul's second missionary journey map*, viewed 16 November 2024, from [https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/paul%27s\\_second\\_journey\\_map.htm](https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/paul%27s_second_journey_map.htm)  
**FIGURE 2:** Paul's second journey.

are ignored or often overlooked because of self-reliance, individual rights and democracy, which reduces dependence on God and panders towards secularism. Paul in Colossians 1:21–23 mentioned suffering as part of his missionary package, a means of identifying with Christ and remembering it as part of his Commission. Therefore, he rejoiced in it. The threatening, imprisonment, flogging and insults were regarded as a vehicle for advancing the Gospel. Also, his intercessions for the work and converts show his reliance on God and personal spiritual discipline (40–50). The consciousness of giving Christ his all made him resolve to do what he was called to do in the strength and direction of God, who calls him and endure hardships as part of the cost the redeemed must pay to see others redeemed. This devotion propelled him to labour more than other Apostles, and his results still speak for him.

### Reaching target groups

Paul developed the pattern of first reaching the Jews with the Gospel before moving on to preach to the gentiles, having a premonition that the Jews have a 'prescriptive right' to hear the Gospel first before others, which was why he always preached at the Jewish synagogue first before moving to other city centres where gentiles could also hear the Gospel. Though he was called an apostle to the gentiles, he always began with the Jews before reaching the gentiles afterwards (Nwanguma 2016:8). Paul in Romans 1:14–16 spoke of his indebtedness to people groups, mentioning the

Greeks, the Barbarians and the Jews. He was conscious of the perspectives for or against those people groups and avoided discriminating against any but was compelled to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Harrison opines that Paul recognised an obligation to reach marginalised people groups outside the body of Christ, encouraging the Roman house churches to embrace the Barbarians who had some relations with Romans and tribes from the Latin West that were not so regarded as compliant to the Roman empire's rule of law (2013:315). This strategy is the bedrock for his contextualisation of the Gospel, which made his converts embrace the holistic Gospel and consider Christianity an alien religion because he could identify with them in their contexts.

### Demographical and ministerial strategies

Fred Jonathan (2012:5) observes in his discussion that Paul's missionary methods confined his efforts to four provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia, chose large cities as strategic centres for faith propagation, began his preaching in Synagogues, preferred to preach to responsive people, maintained contact with sending Church, planted churches in urban centres, worked with others as a team, contextualised his message without compromising the gospel message and adeptly communicated the gospel unchanging message.



Source: Conforming To Jesus Ministry, n.d.c, *Paul's third missionary journey map*, viewed 16 November 2024, from [https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/paul's\\_third\\_journey\\_map.htm](https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/paul's_third_journey_map.htm)  
**FIGURE 3:** Paul's third journey.

Chibuzo Nwanguma (2016:58) highlights McCain's identification of Paul's eight missionary strategies as a concentration on population centres, beginning with Jews and expanding to the gentiles, focusing on influential people and building leaders, use of the supernatural in evangelism, team efforts, discipleship and follow-up, utilising advantage of his background and natural endowments and utilising the situation suitably to pass the gospel message. The ministerial geography and demography Paul centred around cities focusing on reaching multitudes of people for, reflecting the purpose of and responding to the programme of salvation.

Furthermore, Paul prioritised evangelising strategic city centres with the intention that lesser towns and smaller districts would be evangelised from the influential cities (David Evens 2016). David F Detwiler (1995:34–40) reflects on Acts 14:21–23 and notes that Paul's ministry strategies include preaching to make disciples, emphasising spiritual growth to nurture disciples, providing spiritual leadership through planting churches and training leaders to organise disciples and committing Disciples to God's care through incessant intercessions for them and moving on to new territories. His mission was mainly carried out in an urban context. He adapted to ministering to various people, addressing multitudes in religious or secular settings, encountering government officials and sometimes

contending with mob activities. Still, in all, he made it a duty to witness Christ to everyone he met regardless of the circumstances, and he was able to establish Christianity in those urban centres, which also spread to the surrounding regions. He took Christianity from the Judean and Samaritan enclave into the then-known world, establishing its presence in the major cities.

## Urban Church planting

From the previous discussions, Paul was heralding salvation messages and consciously planting or strengthening existing churches. He always gathered his converts into self-governing bodies (churches), appointing elders and able men as leaders over them, likewise superintended over the churches, which was evident in his epistles to those churches (ed. Tabbernee 2024:12). Schnabel (2007:256–258) notes that Paul's missionary focus on cities may be based on two probabilities: it is either a strategic decision of Paul on the expectation that believers will carry the gospel message to the surrounding regions or a literary decision of Luke in writing Acts. He argues for the second position but eventually agrees with Roland Allen that urban missionary activities could be a strategy for reaching the surrounding areas if the church in the city is evangelistic and actively planting daughter churches. Paul aligned his call with his vision of making Christ known to all men and chose significant cities where the message could meet the needed



audience to share and spread the faith and gather them into churches that would further the Gospel to the uttermost part of the world. He was deliberately strategic; it may not be as refined as missiologists may put it today, but he intentionally established Christ's witness through Church planting in every major city of the Greco-Roman world.

## Funding strategies

Tabbernee (ed. 2024:12) observes that Paul required financial resources for personal and ministry needs on his missionary journeys. He conjectured that Paul might have received financial help from the sending Church, though the scriptures did not substantiate this. However, it was inevitable that Paul did not require his converts to meet his financial needs while working among them like some other Apostles but resorted most of the time to self-support. Paul's funding strategies involve self-support through a bi-vocational approach to ministry. His letters revealed this funding mode in about three places where he referred to working with his hands to meet his ministry needs (Th 2:9, 1 Cor 4:12 and 1 Cor 9:1–18). Also, in Acts 18:3, he had trade partners Aquila and Priscilla in tent-making. Acts 20:34, in his address to Ephesians elders, also affirms his bi-vocational strategy towards funding his missionary efforts. This strategy was used for a two-pronged purpose: to meet people to share the Gospel and meet personal needs (Tolmie 2017:96). Paul did not allow funding to be a limitation or condition for his mission efforts. He typifies a sound bi-vocational ministry, which mission agencies should seriously consider. Because of his financial freedom, he could plan, sponsor and execute his God-given vision. He also became an example of a hardworking Christian to his converts.

## Personal interactions, influence and contextualisation of his message

Paul exercised personal influence immersed in 'deep religious experience and passionate human sympathy'. In Philippi, Lydia's house and the jailer's family became pillars of the Church. Achaia saw the house of Stephanas as a bastion of Christianity through interactions with Paul. Aquila and Priscilla interacted with Paul, which helped them become great Christian leaders (David Evens 2016). Paul's educational background and personal passion were reflected in how he was able to contextualise his message to his audience for either Jews or Gentiles. For the Jews, Paul reasoned with them from the Old Testament, establishing a common ground with them and, from there, proving to them that Jesus is the Christ. For the gentiles, he introduced God to them as Supreme to their idols, using natural things and their cultural wisdom to now reveal God's decision about the salvation of humankind and the need for them to embrace such love (Ugo 2012:14). Paul's personality and background exposure helped him to influence believers and unbelievers alike. His contagious relational personality attracted many to Christ, and his (Paul's) model of Christianity, empathy, frankness, love, practicality and

objectivity became a potent strategic tool that endeared him to many, which was instrumental in training and raising disciples to be leaders.

## Teamwork and leadership development

Paul was not a lone ranger in his missionary journeys; he always worked with someone and encouraged networking and partnership to further the Gospel. He always had companions and then built a network of disciples around himself who could be entrusted with important missions like sending them to smaller cities or churches he had laboured with letters. People like Barnabas, Mark, Sylvanus (Silas), Luke, Timothy, Erastus, Aristarchus, Epaphroditus, Titus and others were Paul's companions at one time (ed. Tabbernee 2024:5). As discussed earlier, his personality attracted many Christians to work with him and learn under him. He could be said to be one of the Apostles who produced more church leaders than others. He had many disciples to whom he could delegate responsibilities in furthering the Gospel when he could not attend to issues or was incapacitated by trials and imprisonment. He reproduced himself in others, and those who learned under him became instrumental in expanding Christianity. For example, Timothy worked in Ephesus, and Titus pastored in Crete.

## Spiritual and miraculous powers

The demonstration of supernatural powers in his missionary journeys significantly influenced his ability to attract people to hear the Gospel. The curse on Elymas, the man's healing at Lystra and the exorcism of the Philippian girl were notable pieces of evidence of his successful mission because of the demonstration of supernatural powers. Though he did not imply that his mission must be confirmed by miracle, he accepted them as divinely given (Mutavhatsindi 2017:8). The supernatural demonstration is also a significant strategy that resulted from Paul's spiritual discipline and interconnectedness with the Holy Spirit. His Gospel was evidenced by miracles like any other apostle, which validated his Gospel message and rallied the crowd to hear and believe in Jesus. Spiritual power is a great and strategic tool in confirming the life and power of Christ to those who do not know him, and Paul used it to turn people from their idols into the living God.

## Missiological implications and lessons for urban mission practitioners

Urban Church planting is a key feature in Paul's ministry; contemporary mission agencies and Urban Church planters need to see Paul as their ministry's progenitor and learn from his ministry strategies and impacts. Nwanguma (2017:5) observes that as accomplished as Paul was in missionary practice, his mission principles and models have often been partially or entirely ignored. He cites Roland Allen's criticism

of modern missionary methods as lacking in comparison to Paul's method, which focuses on building and strengthening indigenous churches with leaders leading ministry among their people with a complete spiritual authority of their own. He always focuses on preaching the Gospel to large groups, small groups and individuals as an opportunity to plant churches. Scholars also agreed that Paul's missionary strategy was to preach the Gospel and plant churches in significant urban centres (Evans 2016:145–146). The focus on cities in Paul's ministry was a passionate strategy to reach more people and lands for Christ as he recognised people as God's way of accomplishing his purpose.

By implication, more prominent cities were described as well suited for communicating the Gospel because they were pulsing with life and had good infrastructures and access to the surrounding regions as they are likely to be administrative centres to the areas. Paul's ministry is continuously domiciled in the cities, as he always employed rhetoric, verbal images and metaphors suitable for urban contexts, unlike Jesus, who mostly used parables in rural contexts. In urban centres, Paul encountered individuals from diverse social backgrounds, including ethnic origin, nationality, wealth, employment status, age, gender and public office. He had the opportunity to share the Gospel with people regardless of their status, paying particular attention to the poor (Rabens 2017:112–114). Urban missions require sagacity, intelligence and the ability to connect with others, proclaim the Gospel and gather people into God's family, all of which Paul exemplifies. Urban Church planters should recognise that their locations are strategic tools for fulfilling the Great Commission. They should passionately aim to raise converts as disciples who are ready to take the Gospel to the surrounding regions.

Moreover, personal conviction and passion for fulfilling God's call should be primary for Urban Church planters. When they understand the dimensions of their call like Paul, it will not be challenging to discover strategies and implement them as they fulfil their callings. Kroeger (2009:227–232) identifies Paul's dynamic mission principles as an in-depth understanding of God's call, radical commitment to Christ, readiness to accept suffering, insightful mission methods adapted to the recipient's context and worldview, urgency in proclaiming the Gospel, deep love for the people constituting the Church, teamwork with others, commitment to social transformation, effective and exemplary lifestyle and total trust in God's providence. These mission principles should be imbibed by Urban Church planters who will meet with people from diverse backgrounds and have to relate with them closely to get them converted and become part of God's family in a context saturated with diverse religious and social positions.

Another missiological implication and lesson for urban missionaries is devotion, aptitude and commitment to dynamic Gospel preaching and living the Gospel. Paul's mission strategy from his personal life shows a commitment

to preaching the Gospel and becoming the Gospel. He used concentration methods of preaching where converts were gathered into churches, appointed converted local Christians to be leaders of those churches, employed team ministry and utilised corrective and constructive engagement for the transformation of the people, practising indigenous and contextual missions (Moe 2017:104–108). Also, Paul exemplifies total dependence on God through his suffering and intercession. This paradigm should also be integrated into every evangelistic and discipleship effort to be largely successful (Urga 2021:50). Urban missionaries should focus on strengthening their Christian lives before reaching out to others for Christ. Their lives must align with the Gospel they preach, as this alignment will be affirmed by Divine power, enabling them to cultivate lasting converts and reliable church members.

Likewise, Gospel preaching should have church planting as its ultimate goal. A church well planted and grounded in Christ is a local mission agency. Detwiler (1995:41) observes that missionary activity is not just limited to preaching the Gospel but also nurturing the converts and organising them into churches that will continue to replicate the same in the community by ensuring that people are disciples and converted first before admission into the Church, the Church should be committed to nurturing young believers. Older believers should provide exemplary lifestyles and spiritual leadership for the new converts, and all believers should depend on God for their spiritual lives. Alawode (2020:2–3) notes that Paul employed the strategies of focusing on reaching the responsive people, planting churches in strategic cities and towns as cities are also accessible to many from the remote provinces, starting house churches to emphasise communal relationships exemplified by the love of Christ and contextualising the message of the Gospel to the new converts in their varying contexts as led by the Holy Spirit. He then highlights the contemporary church planting models as a programmed-based church, purpose-based Church, seeker-based Church, ministry-based Church, relation-based Church and affinity-based Church. Urban Church planters and missionaries should intentionally predetermine the identity, nature and functions of the Church they aspire to plant. There must be an authentic vision about the kind of church they intend to build. Taking cues from Paul will help them plant and grow a Great Commission Church and not a named denomination.

In funding, Tolmie (2017:99), citing Siemens, notes that Paul's bi-vocational strategy implies credibility, so he would not be accused of preaching for gain. It served as a means of identification, helped him associate with the working classes and modelled practical Christian living and biblical work ethics to his converts, raising them as lay evangelists. Nwanguma (2017:7) notes that Paul had the right to support his converts but did not use it so that it would not become an obstacle to the Gospel of Christ. This position does not mean that he did not receive financial support or gifts from churches but mostly earned money by

working so that, in whichever context, the Gospel's sanctity and the messenger's integrity would be preserved. Paul balanced his self-supportive policy, support of churches and dependency on God through incessant prayers (Chung 2006:105). Though Paul was not known to have burdened the churches he planted with his needs, he led them to give generously towards relief for the Jerusalem donation, which was regarded as the most excellent fund-raising project carried out by the Christians of the first century. It took 3 years to complete, and its success was because of Paul's efforts in the Pauline churches that helped salvage Jerusalem Church from total collapse during the 11-year famine period (Graham 2019:140). In Acts 20:4, it was recorded that delegates from churches he had raised funds for the Jerusalem Church joined him with their gifts on his journey to Jerusalem (Strandenaes 2010:80). Urban missionaries should be ready for financial self-sacrifice and should not make their church planting efforts about money they can receive or raise from the multitudes they see coming to church.

On leadership, it was established that Paul utilised the strategy of Urban Church planting as he preached and established Christian communities in places such as Thessalonica, Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus and Colossae. He provided leadership by combining his Apostolic and Pastoral ministry for his converts. He went to places that had not heard the Gospel while reaching his congregations through epistles or sending envoys (those he had raised as leaders) to visit those churches on his behalf. His leadership concept was service, so he was always ready to serve the Church of God with all his abilities and capabilities (Agosto 2012:16). Paul's leadership model is servant leadership, which he modelled for his disciples and companions. This point is also strategic for urban missionaries. They must be versatile as leaders and reproduce themselves in their converts, as leadership is key in church ministry.

Therefore, Paul's Life and ministry should be emulated if one will have successful urban missions. He had a burning desire to win as many as possible to Christ, either Jews or Gentiles, whose populations were significant in the city centres that also served as centres for communication and education, where he could preach to multitudes of people (Schnabel 2007:260). Ikechukwu Ugo (2012:3–15) identifies particular and practical church planting strategies of Paul as urban evangelism, natural location where the Gospel could be freely disseminated (synagogue first principle), preaching in religiously neutral or public places to reach diverse peoples, household or family evangelism, consistent and extended period of teaching and interactions with people, teamwork, follow-up of believers, leadership training and contextualisation of the Gospel message. Urban Church planting ministry must stem from personal calling, conviction, strategic vision and decisions. These values and virtues are what Paul embodied and should be the embodiment for those called into urban missions.

## Conclusion

The life and ministry of Paul, as documented in the Bible, serve as a manual for urban mission agencies and missionaries. His call, character and commitment are among his most powerful strategies for fulfilling the Great Commission. His strong sense of duty and gratitude to Christ for his salvation and calling distinguish him from other Apostles. He was highly strategic in his missional approach, utilising every opportunity to make Christ known in every place and circumstance he encountered. He is a key factor in the rapid spread of Christianity throughout the Greco-Roman world.

Paul's missional strategies significantly contributed to the early development and impact of Christianity throughout much of the Mediterranean world during his time. One approach that stands out, around which other strategies revolve, is his urban strategy. Establishing a presence in cities tends to lead to replication in the surrounding regions. The Acts of the Apostles and Pauline epistles document that most of Paul's ministry and the churches he planted were located in urban centres. Many scholars agree that he was intentional about his urban focus and strategy. Therefore, Paul serves as a model for urban missionaries, who should study his methods and emulate his pattern of ministry to effectively reach the world for Christ.

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A.O.A. is the sole author of this research article.

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## Disclaimer

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