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# **KANSAS CITY EVANGELISM REPORT**

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REVIVING EVANGELISM IN THE  
HEART OF AMERICA

“The city is too big,  
too diverse, for any  
one church or ministry  
to reach everyone  
in a centralized  
or programmatic  
approach.

The only way to  
reach everyone is  
a decentralized  
practice where  
all believers live  
on mission everyday,  
where they live,  
learn, work,  
and play.”

- Gary Kendall

A Letter from LoveKC Director	4
About This Report	6
Key Findings	8
The Centrality of Prayer	10
Maintaining a Lifestyle of Evangelism in a Culture of Business	12
The Power of Our Stories	14
Unity & Collaboration in the Evangelistic Community	16
The Power & Limitations of Resources, Tools & Technology	18
Youth Engagement	20
Cultural Engagement in a Diverse Community	22
Gospel Informed Optimism	24
Strategic Opportunities	26
Love KC Commitments	28
Acknowledgments	32
Appendices	34
Interview Questions	36
Recommendations For Church Leaders	38
Recommended Resources	40
Prayer Guide for Evangelism in Kansas City	42
Group Discussion Questions	44
Methodology & Limitations	46

Dear Friends,

We live in a world of change, and the pace is accelerating, but still, the words of Jesus cut through the clamor: “I have come that you might have life and that more abundantly.” John 10:10 (NKJV)

How should we communicate this abundant life in an increasingly disinterested world? Fewer people start with a Judeo-Christian foundation than any previous time in America’s history. What will keep the U.S. from going the way of Europe, where Christian faith and practice are nearly absent?

COVID accentuated the divide in our culture and fractured relationships. Mental health is at a breaking point. Will these realities silence the church’s voice in today’s world, or are these truths opportunities for the followers of Jesus to demonstrate the words of Jesus? “By this, all will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another.” John 13:35 (NKJV)

We need compelling examples of Jesus living through his people more than ever. Our challenges are real, and at the same time, the difficulties highlight the Jesus difference in the believer’s life. Faith, hope, and love stand out in a world where cynicism and discord are the norm.

We interviewed forty-six Christian leaders, hoping to uncover the best practices around evangelism and learning from one another. We believe if we called out stories of “what’s working,” we could stir passion in the reader’s life to expand their experience. Some tools can enhance the effectiveness of the Big C Church and extend its reach if employed.

This report contains stories affirming the necessity of every believer owning the importance of sharing their faith. We are the church everywhere we go, seven days a week. We are learning that it may not be the large crowd but the small

circle where we can best communicate our faith today as the secular and the sacred lines blur and ministry and marketplace intertwine.

The priesthood of all believers is increasingly important as the culture marginalizes the value of Sunday gatherings. There is a shift from the “come and see” approach to the “go and tell” missional lifestyle. Increasingly equipping and sending join the scoreboard along with conversions and baptisms.

Loving your neighbor is as old as the second great commandment, but it’s never been more critical. What if the best days are ahead for the church—albeit they look different than our recent past? There’s more to learn, so set aside some time to read slowly and think deeply. Invite the Holy Spirit to highlight what would spur you on to “love and good deeds.” Hebrews 10:24

In Him,



Gary Kendall  
Love KC Catalyst

PS: I want to thank Andrew Adudu, who took on the daunting task of completing forty-six interviews and collecting the documentation. Jade Van Slyke and Jenna Gaeddert, thank you; your contributions go far beyond this project. Stacie Mickelson, we couldn’t have done this without your exceptional ability to study the data, find the common themes, survey the many words, and summarize the learnings. Your ability to grasp the immensity of the information and extract the nuggets of truth is remarkable.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Our initiative began in the summer of 2022, driven by a dual purpose: to foster meaningful dialogue about evangelism and to conduct a study of its current status within Kansas City. The outcome is this report, designed to serve as a strategic guide for actionable steps rooted in Jesus' profound commandments to love our neighbors as ourselves and to make disciples of all nations.

### Integrating Barna Insights

This report draws on the insights from the Barna Group's 2019 report, *Reviving Evangelism: Current Realities That Demand a New Vision for Sharing Faith*. This integration allows us to align local observations with broader trends and provides a valuable backdrop for our findings. The inclusion of Barna data is motivated by our commitment to offering a holistic understanding of evangelism in Kansas City, informed by local experiences and national research.

### Methodology and Limitations

In our pursuit of comprehensiveness, we conducted interviews with forty-six leaders from various churches and para-church organizations across all five regions of Kansas City. To maintain objectivity, we engaged an external researcher in our analysis process.

To encourage candid responses and protect the anonymity of our interviewees, we've chosen not to associate their perspectives and quotes with their names, except in cases where leaders provided explicit permission. This approach ensures that leaders can freely share their experiences and perspectives.

It's important to note that while this report offers a robust overview, it does not claim to provide an exhaustive account of the multifaceted landscape of evangelism. The inherent subjectivity of qualitative analysis, coupled with the specificity of our interviewee group, shapes the report's perspective. Please refer to the appendices for a detailed exploration of our methodology and limitations.

### Key Findings

Our findings illustrate a multifaceted view of evangelism in Kansas City. Leaders emphasize the significance of individual faith journeys while grappling with the challenges and opportunities of modern lifestyles and technology. There is a shared understanding that, as traditional methods evolve, the digital realm offers new avenues for evangelism.

The Kansas City evangelistic community emerges as dynamic and vibrant. Our interviews paint a picture of a community deeply rooted in its history, optimistic about its future, and actively seeking tools and strategies to enhance its evangelism efforts. By leveraging its strengths and addressing the opportunities before it, the community aligns with its scriptural mandate to love and disciple, positioning itself for continued growth and impact.

### Collaborative Strategies and LoveKC's Commitments

At the end of this report, we suggest collaborative strategies for bolstering what is already working in evangelism in Kansas City. We also outline LoveKC's commitments to those efforts. In the appendices, you will find recommendations and resources for church leaders developed in light of the invaluable insights from our interviews with leaders.

# 8

## KEY FINDINGS OF EVANGELISM IN KANSAS CITY

- 1 | The Centrality of Prayer
- 2 | Maintaining a Lifestyle of Evangelism in a Culture of Business
- 3 | The Power of Our Stories
- 4 | Unity and Collaboration in Evangelistic Community
- 5 | The Power and Limitations of Resources, Tools, and Technology
- 6 | Youth Engagement
- 7 | Cultural Engagement in a Diverse Context
- 8 | Gospel Informed Optimism



*“Gary Kendall introduced me to this idea of divine appointments and asking God to prepare us to see them, and expect them, and be ready for them.”*

— Deacon Dana Neamy

Prayer is essential in the strategies and experiences of the leaders we interviewed for evangelism. They consistently emphasized its significance, viewing it as both the foundational cornerstone and a practical tool in their efforts. One para-church leader said succinctly, *“The primary thing that goes forward first is prayer.”*

For these leaders, prayer is not an optional add-on but the foundation upon which their evangelistic endeavors stand. Almost every leader we spoke with mentioned prayer or the guidance of the Holy Spirit when discussing their approach to evangelism. It’s not just a routine but a profoundly spiritual practice. As one pastor said, *“We undergird everything with prayer.”*

When recounting their personal faith journeys and how they came to Christianity, many leaders highlighted the profound role of prayer. It serves as the preparation for listening to God and others. It fosters a willing heart and enables individuals to become vessels for God’s work. A leader in our interviews asked, *“How do we listen well, respond well, befriend well, and, as the Spirit leads us, communicate well, at the right times and pray for God to give the increase?”*

The concept of divine appointments, introduced by one of the leaders, underscores the importance of asking God to prepare individuals to recognize and embrace these providential encounters. It’s about being expectant and ready for moments orchestrated by God.

Praying with someone else is, in itself, an act of evangelism. Sometimes, people are more open to prayer than to traditional preaching. This highlights the communal nature of prayer and its profound impact on the faith journeys of the one praying and the one receiving prayer.

It is evident that prayer is not a peripheral practice but the essence of effective evangelism. It lays the spiritual groundwork, guides actions, and opens doors to meaningful encounters with God and others.



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**prayer**

/prer/

**A solemn request for help  
or expression of thanks  
addressed to God.**

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*“Evangelism requires you to walk with a person.  
And that requires a person’s talent and treasure.  
And just to be honest, people don’t want to give  
up their time, their talent, and their treasure.”*

— Marvin Daniels

The heart of evangelism lies in the personal faith journeys of believers. This emphasis on personal narratives is evident among the leaders we interviewed. However, *Reviving Evangelism* suggests that the methods and perceptions around sharing these narratives might need reevaluation, especially given the contrasting views between Christians and non-Christians on effective faith-sharing.

**Everyday Evangelism:** The leaders we interviewed saw incorporating evangelism into everyday encounters and meetings as a valuable opportunity. There’s a recognition that evangelism can occur indirectly, even when not actively pursued. The influence of one’s faith can manifest in various ways that contribute to evangelism, especially as it relates to building relationships.

One leader emphasized, *“As followers of Jesus, everyone is called to be a minister. No matter what your role is, if you’re a mom and dad, a kid, a grandma, a doctor, a dentist, a missionary, a pastor, all of us are called to be ministers of the Gospel, and all of us are called to reach the lost.”*

**Building Relationships:** Respondents emphasize the importance of building relationships with neighbors and the broader community. Being a good neighbor and fostering genuine connections are seen as foundational to effective evangelism. There’s a consistent emphasis on the potential of deepening relationships as a means for evangelism, particularly as it relates to trust.

Trust is an integral facet of evangelistic endeavors, paving the way for more profound and authentic interactions. By fostering trust, individuals can share the Gospel more effectively, helping to ensure their message is heard, reflected upon, and considered. This trust becomes the linchpin, bridging potential misunderstandings and promoting a genuine connection between individuals.

In *Reviving Evangelism*, Barna found that non-Christians who engage in regular conversation about faith are much more open to exploring faith than those who don’t. However, the study also revealed that some practicing Christians have limited non-Christian relationships and conversations about faith.

**Problem with Over-reliance on Church-Centric Evangelism:** Some leaders note that evangelistic efforts often revolve solely around the church, limiting outreach potential. The challenge of moving beyond the church’s physical and metaphorical “walls” is a recurring theme.

Effective evangelism requires outreach beyond these confines, where individuals become the conduits of evangelism rather than the church being the sole focus.

**Time Constraints:** Building evangelism into an everyday lifestyle is constrained by the challenges of modern life, where time constraints and the compartmentalized nature of daily routines are recurring challenges. Leaders emphasized how busy many people are and how that can impede evangelistic efforts.

One leader succinctly said, *“Evangelism requires you to walk with a person. And that requires a person’s talent and treasure. And just to be honest, people don’t want to give up their time, their talent, and their treasure.”*

*“We’re really good as a church at telling stories. And so our people are constantly seeing people come to faith on the arms of normal everyday people. And I think it takes away the mystique that you have to be, you know, an ordained minister to do it. Think that that seems to be a way that creates a culture of evangelists.”*

— Randy Frazee

**Personal testimonies** form the bedrock of effective evangelism. The impact of these stories is profound, as exemplified in many leaders’ experiences. However, *Reviving Evangelism* suggests that while personal testimonies are powerful, there’s a need for self-awareness and adaptability in how they’re shared, especially given the gaps in perception between Christians and non-Christians. For example, *“While some non-Christians express a desire for more evidence (44%) and a better reputation of the faith (34%), practicing Christians tend to underestimate the importance of these factors in non-Christians’ interest.”*

Personal spiritual experiences and journeys play a crucial role in evangelistic efforts. Many individuals mention personal spiritual experiences as a driving force behind their evangelism efforts. Such experiences often serve as powerful testimonies and provide motivation.

While personal testimony can be a strength, there are also challenges in articulating and sharing one’s faith journey. Some leaders acknowledge the need to help congregants understand and practice sharing their faith story as a critical component of living a lifestyle of evangelism. One leader wondered, *“I don’t know that people are comfortable sharing their faith.”* In *Reviving Evangelism*, Barna identified significant gaps between what practicing Christians and others perceive as desirable

qualities in a faith conversation partner, *“Practicing Christians believe that someone gifted at sharing their faith possesses qualities such as confidence in sharing their own perspective (58%) and an obvious, visible faith of their own (57%). However, non-Christians and lapsed Christians value just two qualities in a conversation partner: listening without judgment (62%) and not forcing a conclusion (50%).”*

To harness the transformative potential of personal testimonies and bridge the perception gaps, equipping believers to share their faith stories with empathy and openness is paramount in today’s evangelism landscape.



*“I think a willingness for churches to partner in places that are forgotten, right here in our city, will help us to do a better job of spreading the good news. That would be helpful. So any kind of collaboration, any kind of call or resources, talking about how we must work together for the good of the city.”*

— Mike King

Unity in the evangelistic community is paramount, although the broader Christian community faces challenges in presenting a united front. Navigating a dynamic and often divided landscape requires collaboration and innovation. Working in teams or joint initiatives strengthens the evangelistic approach, ensuring more effective and broad-reaching endeavors.

Throughout the interviews, there was a strong emphasis on connection within the body of Christ regarding effective evangelism. This connection is broken down into the following sub-themes.

**Church Collaboration:** Church collaboration underscores the symbiotic efforts within church congregations, ministries, and worship groups. It emphasizes the potential of collective action in evangelistic efforts, suggesting that churches can enhance their outreach and impact by working in harmony. This collaboration is about pooling resources and sharing beliefs, values, and visions to create a unified front in promoting the Gospel.

One leader emphasized, *“I think a willingness of churches to partner in places that are forgotten, right here in our city, will help us do a better job of spreading the good news. That would be helpful.”*

**Community Partnership:** Collaborating with the local community, neighborhood, or city is pivotal in evangelistic efforts. This theme emphasizes the importance of churches or organizations partnering with their immediate communities for a more comprehensive outreach.

**Organizational Alliance:** Forming alliances or partnerships with other organizations, groups, or networks can amplify the reach and impact of evangelistic initiatives. Such collaborations often lead to shared resources, knowledge, and strategies. Beyond logistical advantages, organizational alliances foster a sense of community and shared purpose, ensuring evangelistic efforts are more comprehensive and resonant.

**Spiritual Unity:** Unity in spirit, faith, beliefs, or doctrine is seen as crucial for evangelism. This theme suggests that a unified spiritual perspective ensures a consistent message and approach, fostering a deeper connection with the audience. It's not just about adhering to the same beliefs but genuinely understanding and valuing their essence, enhancing evangelistic efforts' depth and sincerity.

Unity and collaboration within the evangelistic community emerge as vital components of effective outreach. Leaders in Kansas City recognize the power of working together within churches, with the local community, through organizational alliances, or by fostering spiritual unity to strengthen their evangelistic endeavors and make a more profound impact.

*“Alpha is a tool built on relationships. Listening is an essential practice if we are to engage in effective relational evangelism.”*

— Jenna Gaeddert

The importance of effective resources for evangelism cannot be understated. Many respondents emphasized the significance of tools, technology, and resources as contributing to successful evangelism and an area requiring improvement. Of the 46 leaders interviewed, 33 mentioned tools, resources, technology, training, and related supports concerning what’s working well or as part of their evangelism approach, and 42 leaders expressed the need for better tools, resources, technology, training, and support.

Respondents conveyed a desire for enhanced tools, resources, and training to elevate their evangelism efforts, with a particular focus on practical and concrete tools. While many acknowledged the benefits of tools, they also emphasized that their effectiveness relies on pairing them with meaningful relationships and proactive use.

One leader remarked, *“I don’t know that we need more resources. I think just some better modeling,” highlighting the importance of practical guidance and examples.”*

Another leader emphasized the value of storytelling, stating, *“What would better help us equip our people? Listen. I don’t think it’s a book or a resource. I think we’re resourced. I think we’re educated beyond our obedience. I need people to open up their stories.”*

Our research reveals that leaders utilize a diverse range of evangelism resources and training options. This diversity suggests that leaders are drawing from a wide array of resources and support systems. We’ve compiled some of the most commonly used resources in the appendices’ Resource page.

It’s worth noting that in *Reviving Evangelism*, Barna suggests that Christians often emphasize the wrong qualities in faith conversations. This insight prompts reflection on whether the available tools align with non-Christians’ needs. In essence, we must continually ask ourselves, “Do the tools we have match the need?” to ensure that our resources and tools effectively reach the desired audience and fulfill the mission of evangelism.



*“What stands out to me a lot for young people, when it comes to sharing faith and seeing people come to Christ, is belonging.”*

— Olivia Williamson

Initially, our thematic analysis of the interview data did not highlight youth engagement as a top-level theme. However, recognizing the critical role that engaging youth plays in understanding and bolstering evangelism, we reexamined the interviews to uncover strategies, approaches, challenges, and opportunities related to youth evangelism within the context of Kansas City.

We discovered that 24 leaders we interviewed specifically mentioned youth engagement in their evangelism efforts, indicating a moderate representation of the youth theme. We did not specifically ask leaders about their approaches to engaging youth in evangelism. Nevertheless, those who brought it up shared valuable insights into three main areas of focus:

**Innovative Outreach:** Many churches in Kansas City are adopting innovative approaches to engage the youth. For example, they are opening up their facilities to provide a space for students to have lunch, engage in recreational activities, and connect with their peers. This creative engagement serves as a bridge to deeper conversations about faith.

One leader highlighted the importance of building relationships with young people first, showing genuine care for them as individuals, saying, *“I think the first thing that I always do, especially to the younger generation, is by getting to know them first, showing up and building that relationship and showing them that you truly care about them as a person.”*

**Personal Transformation:** The transformative power of faith is evident among the young people of Kansas City. Testimonies from youth highlight moments of personal encounters with Jesus during their formative years. These encounters shape their faith journeys and motivate them to share their experiences with their peers.

**Investment in Youth:** Kansas City’s leaders strongly emphasize investing in the younger generation. Youth leaders are pivotal in mentoring and guiding young believers, fostering spiritual growth, and providing support.

One leader shared their church’s journey of prioritizing youth engagement to reach the broader community. This approach has led to youth finding their way to Jesus and their parents responding to the message and becoming part of the faith community.

Youth engagement in Kansas City’s evangelism efforts reflects a multifaceted approach encompassing innovation, personal transformation, and substantial investment in the youth. The experiences and strategies underscore this demographic’s significance in shaping evangelism’s future within the unique context of Kansas City.



*“Because honestly, when you tell people that you are a Christian or a faith-based organization, and this is just a sad reality, if you stick the word evangelical in front, they’re turned off, they view evangelical Christians, as people who are closed-minded, who don’t embody diversity who don’t love people.”*

— Ray Jarrett

*“Additionally, many [Christians] lag behind their non-Christian peers in the kinds of diverse relationships that are desirable for cultivating a healthy evangelistic culture and opportunities to share Christ.”*

— *Reviving Evangelism*,  
Barna Group

In our research, cultural engagement emerged as a significant aspect, even though it was not initially identified as a primary theme in our interviews. We revisited our data to delve into how leaders address contemporary societal challenges through evangelism.

Leaders emphasized the importance of building bridges between diverse communities. They focus on creating platforms and opportunities for engagement that foster understanding and trust. This approach promotes inclusivity and bridges cultural and societal gaps through evangelism.

Another noticeable trend is the integration of practical initiatives within evangelistic efforts. Churches actively teach English and organize community events like carnivals and more. These initiatives contribute to effective evangelism and help communities understand and embrace diverse cultures.

Our discussions with leaders underscored the significance of building relationships and understanding different cultures. They stressed the importance of sharing personal testimonies within these contexts. This shift in emphasis from mere preaching to genuine connection with individuals from various backgrounds has proven impactful.

It is important to note that in our interviews, there was a limitation in the underrepresentation of church leaders from Region 5 (Wyandotte County, Kansas). This gap in representation raises questions about potential biases in our analysis. The emphasis on “cross-cultural” evangelism may unintentionally overshadow thriving localized evangelistic efforts in this region.

Evangelism and church culture are deeply intertwined with the broader socio-cultural dynamics of a region. The underrepresentation of leaders from Region 5 may result in a lack of understanding of the unique perspectives, experiences, and challenges specific to that community in Kansas City.

Our discussions with leaders highlight the importance of collaboration, partnership, and unity for successful evangelism in Kansas City. To truly embody these principles, addressing disparities in representation is crucial. This aligns with Biblical principles of justice and can enhance the holistic effectiveness of evangelistic efforts.

Wyandotte County boasts unique cultural, racial, and socio-economic dynamics that could inspire innovative evangelistic approaches, showcase transformational stories, and provide insights not present in other regions. The underrepresentation of this region in our interviews may result in missed opportunities to tap into these valuable contributions.

*“I believe, I just had this sense in my Spirit, that there’s a greater hunger and thirst in people, you know, there’s this collision ahead of us of the world and the Gospel, that’s going to be magnificent.”*

— Mark Smith

While analyzing the sentiments surrounding evangelism’s challenges and opportunities in Kansas City, it was heartening to note an overwhelming wave of optimism among the leaders we interviewed. Despite evangelism’s hurdles, a resounding majority remain hopeful, viewing these challenges not as setbacks but as avenues for growth and transformative change specific to Kansas City.

This positive outlook is not just a fleeting sentiment but is echoed consistently across our analyses, underscoring a community deeply committed to its mission within the unique context of Kansas City and undeterred by obstacles. Such unwavering optimism is a testament to the resilient Spirit and faith of those dedicated to evangelism in this vibrant city.

Adding depth to this optimism, research from Barna described in *Reviving Evangelism* indicates that adults in urban environments like Kansas City *“tend to exhibit higher levels of spiritual hunger and general openness to evangelistic methods, compared to people in the suburbs, small towns, or rural settings.”* This observation raises intriguing questions about the reasons behind what Barna terms “urban openness” and its implications for Christians in high-density and high-diversity communities like Kansas City.

This “urban openness” constitutes an opportunity for Christians in Kansas City’s unique environment to consider how to respond with gospel intention. It aligns with the optimism we’ve witnessed, suggesting that Kansas City might be particularly fertile ground for transformative evangelistic efforts.



## STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

Together, we can harness the power of successful tools and nurture collaboration to amplify the impact of our evangelistic efforts. The strategic opportunities presented here suggest how we might embark on this journey together. However, our team is eager to hear about your ideas and potential collaborative opportunities. Your insights and contributions are invaluable as we work collectively to strengthen our evangelistic community in Kansas City.

### Building a Collaborative Evangelism Team

LoveKC is partnering with the Luis Palau Association and City Gospel Movements to establish a city-wide Evangelism Team (E-Team) in Kansas City. **Andrew Adudu, who led the interviews for this report will lead the KC E-Team.** This team will be made up of strategic cross-sector Christian leaders who are passionate about evangelism. Together, they will act as catalysts to keep evangelism a central part of the gospel movement through various means. Joining the KC E-team ensures the growth of evangelism's priority in the city. For more information, contact **Andrew Adudu at [andrewadudu@gmail.com](mailto:andrewadudu@gmail.com).**

### Promoting Successful Resources in Kansas City

Let's harness the power of proven resources to strengthen our evangelistic efforts. Explore three impactful initiatives below. As we engage with these, let's spark fresh ideas, collaborations, and opportunities for our shared mission.

- **Bless Every Home:** Join the 4,000 individuals participating in the city-wide "Lights" movement, where Christians can adopt their neighborhood and commit to praying for their neighbors. This movement has grown virally through word of mouth and could be bolstered by more concentrated collaborative efforts.

- **Alpha Training:** Embrace Alpha training programs to equip Christians with a deeper understanding of the Good News and practical outreach skills. Encourage your congregations and individuals to participate in Alpha courses, emphasizing the value of training evangelists, resourcing meaningful conversations, and building relationships grounded in safety and friendship.
- **Gloo Digital Evangelism Tool:** The Gloo digital evangelism tool is a valuable resource to connect spiritual explorers with local churches. We encourage more churches in Kansas City to explore this platform, guiding and supporting individuals on their spiritual journeys.

### Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration

We invite you to actively foster collaboration across diverse Christian communities, including churches, para-church organizations, and local leaders. Together, let's align our collective efforts and work on specific evangelistic initiatives, ensuring we design our strategies to maximize impact and effectively reach the diverse audiences in our city.

Toward those ends, consider becoming part of **[everykc.org](http://everykc.org)**, where we organize biannual regional roundtables in the spring and fall, culminating in the annual KC Summit every November. These gatherings provide a platform for leaders to collectively assess our progress toward fulfilling the five Great Commission finish lines in Kansas City. Through these meetings, we capture valuable data, share best practices, and address pressing needs, recognizing that our most significant impact extends beyond the confines of these gatherings.

### Equipping Believers for Everyday Evangelism

The driving force behind Love KC is our Father's desire to see all of His children come home. We pray that everyone in Kansas City will have multiple opportunities to hear and respond to the Good News of Jesus from a friend. At the micro (individual) level, we exist to equip believers to live a contagious Christian faith and to know how to lead their friends to Jesus. Our strategy is to lean into the second great commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. **Bless Every Home**, the art of neighboring, and the BLESS rhythms are helpful tactics. The prayer, care, share, and disciple-making lifestyle lived out where we live, learn, work, and play gives us the best opportunity to mobilize disciples who make disciples. Each disciple loving their neighbor is the core fractal of Christianity that can scale to reach a city and the world.

### Taking Action on a Neighborhood Level

We at Love KC ask the question, what could happen in Kansas City if every neighborhood was adopted by a person living on a mission, every street had a missionary, every family was prayed for by name, and every person had multiple opportunities to hear and respond to the Good News shared by a friend?

Fulfilling the Great Commission is every Christian's calling. You can find equipping resources at [LoveKC.net](http://LoveKC.net). **Love KC Living on Mission** is a Facebook community where you can find encouragement and support for living on mission. The **Love KC YouTube channel** provides prayer tools and the BLESS Podcast. The Love KC team is willing to come alongside individuals, ministries, and churches to model and coach.

### Collaboration Across Regions: A Catalyst for Change

At the macro level, we at Love KC are a catalyst for collaboration in the five regions of Kansas City:

- **Region 1:** Northland
- **Region 2:** Kansas City, Missouri
- **Region 3:** South East Kansas City
- **Region 4:** Johnson City, Kansas
- **Region 5:** Wyandotte and Leavenworth Counties

Key players in this strategy are the catalysts in each region. They know the unique culture and live as indigenous missionaries. Their history, learnings, and practices are honored. Our motion is to come alongside and support.



Love KC promotes the [everykc.org](http://everykc.org) plan as a backbone organization to offer roundtables in each of the five regions in the spring and the fall. This effort culminates annually in a **KC Summit** in November. We at Love KC believe that if we do the 20% required of a catalyst, the body of Christ will do what God naturally designed it to do, which becomes the other 80% of the benefit of being better together. The roundtables bring leaders together to consider the five finish lines of the Great Commission and where we are in the desire to fulfill them in Kansas City. We track data. We note best practices. We rally to needs; the most important work we do together is not in the meeting but what happens outside the meetings.

### Prayer-Walking Every School in Kansas City

A recent example of relationships driving the unfolding vision is the collaboration around the desire to see every school in Kansas City circled by prayer. Caring for Kids, Pray KC, and Claim Your Campus are leading voices and key mobilizers. At the same time, Zero Hour, All America, and Love KC each run a unique version of the vision to see all 850 schools prayer walked in 2023.

### Our Collaborative Approach: Better Together

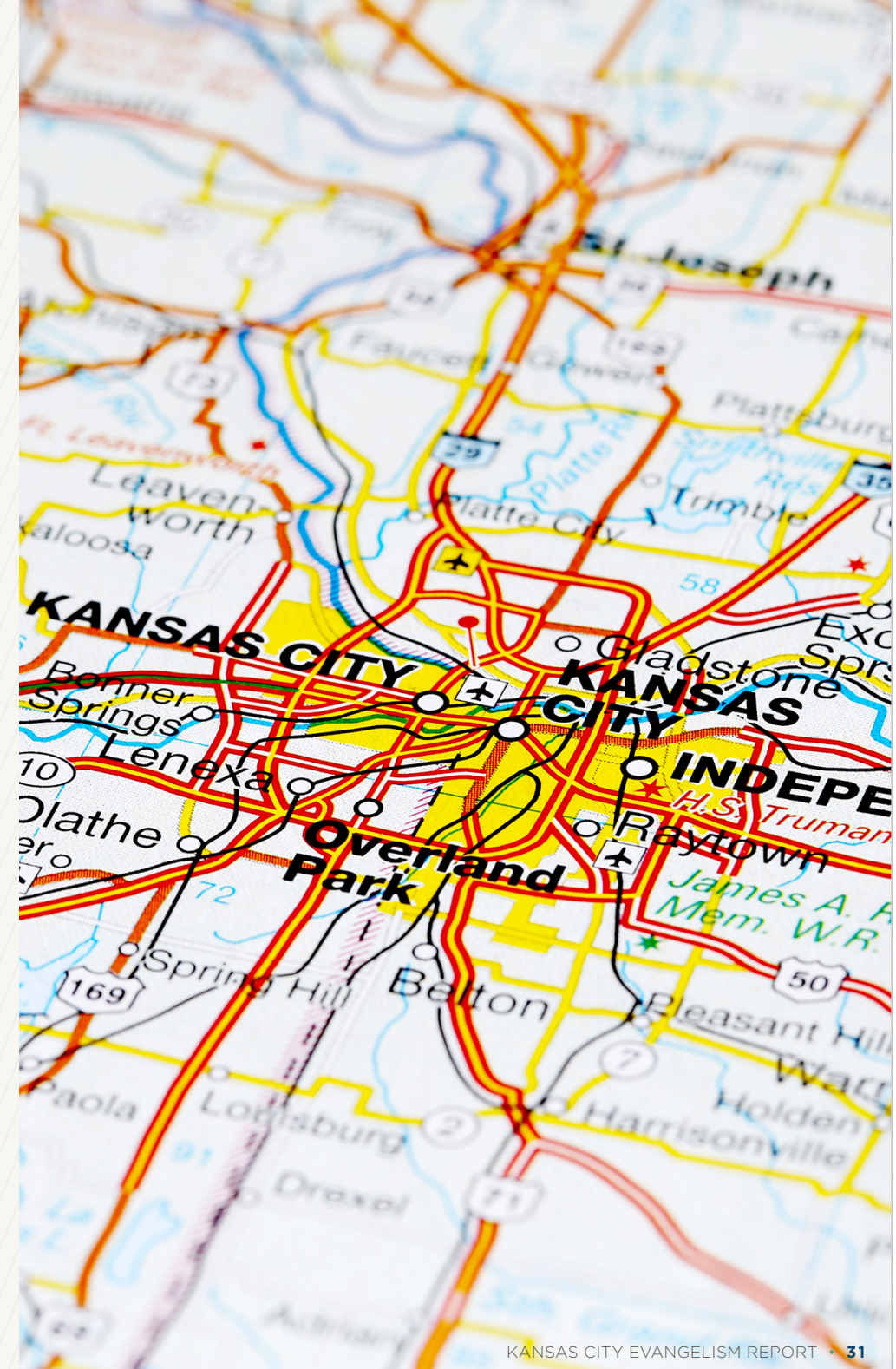
We believe the churches, ministries, and not-for-profits form a Christian ecosystem in the city. In a decentralized system, leadership can come from anywhere. You will not see certain things from us at Love KC: the desire to take credit for what God is doing collectively in KC, controlling the outcome, living with a scarcity mindset, and territorialism. We don't require the region to fly the Love KC flag, nor do we control the pace of the work or the outcomes. We provide vision, tools, communication, infrastructure, data collection, and a database so other parts of the Big C church can do what they do best.

We are truly better together,

The Love KC team,

**Founders:** Gary and Belinda Kendall

**Associates:** Jade VanSlyke, Andrew Adudu, Samantha Ling Crebs, Mark Martin, Tim Stout, Christine Zhong, and Jasmine Villa



### This project is lovingly dedicated to:

**Frank Brown, Bob Hodgdon, and Bruce Phutze** who carried the flame of evangelism in Kansas City for decades. Each participated in, funded, prayed for, and championed efforts that came through Kansas City and out of the city from the early '80s through the early '2020s. This remarkable effort laid a foundation for Kansas City to be known as a "city on a hill." *Thank you!*

### We Honor these Benefactors:

**Gary Kendall** envisioned the plan with **Lizzie Burke** from the **Luis Palau Association (LPA)** in 2020. Thank you to LPA team and CEO **Kevin Palau** for their support throughout the process.

The year-long effort to recruit and track down 46 interviews from key leaders, primarily pastors, required a yeoman effort by **Andrew Adudu** of Love KC. The interviews were conducted, collected, sorted, and studied by Andrew with help from the team of **Gary Kendall, Jade VanSlyke, and Jenna Gaeddert**.

**Stacie Mickelson**, Director of Applied Research & Consulting at the **Emmanuel Gospel Center** in Boston, added her expertise to analyze, summarize, and extract the key learnings from the data.

**Mark Smith**, MyfreeBible.com Mark's vision and support for evangelism in Kansas City is remarkable. His investment in the project is substantial.

**Randy Frazee, Matt Adams, and Westside Family Church** offered key financial contributions and encouragement for the project.

**Gary Ascanio and Howard Russell** gave critical financial support and carried the project forward with prayer.

**The Hodgdon Family Foundation** is a significant donor to the project.

**Love KC** carried the vision forward, faithfully prayed, and supported the project financially. The motivation behind this project is to **keep the priority of evangelism at the center of the work of the Church in Kansas City**. Our passion for those outside of relationship with the Father must match His.



**Gary Kendall**



**Andrew Adudu**



**Jade Van Slyke**



**Jenna Gaeddert**

*The Reviving Evangelism in the Heart of America: The Kansas City Story Team*

*In partnership with*

**LUIS PALAU** ASSOCIATION 



## APPENDICES

1. Steve Barnes | 1MillionStories.org
2. Phil Hopper | Abundant Life Church
3. Joel McGill | All America
4. Vennie Gonzalez | All Christians Together Serving (ACTS)
5. Jenna Gaederrt | Alpha KC
6. Karla Melgar | The Hispanic Archdiocese of KCK
7. Luther Eastman | Bridge of Hope KC
8. Robby Bollinger | Calvary University
9. Dennis Ellis | City Union Mission
10. Olivia Williamson | Claim Your Campus
11. Jim West | Colonial Presbyterian Church
12. Lexi Lang | Engage South KC
13. Bruce McGregor | Freedom Fire Urban Ministry
14. Dan Jacobsen | Heartland Community Church
15. Dr. Evelyn Hill | Hillcrest Transitional Housing
16. Deacon Dana Nearmyer | Deacon and Director of Evangelization for the Archdiocese of KCK
17. Amy Sieve | Hope International
18. Ben Stear | Hope Chapel
19. Lenny LaGuardia | International House of Prayer
20. Mike Bickley | Journey Bible Church
21. Jim Gillespie | Kansas City at I Am Second
22. Brian Hughes | KC Dream Center
23. Rob Wagner | KC Underground
24. Chris Pinion | Life Quest Church
25. Nicole Dinsmore | LifeMission Church
26. Gary Kendall | Love KC
27. Geoffrey Kigenyi | Mercy and Truth Medical Missions
28. Sam Miles | Midtown Baptist Temple
29. Jarrett Meek | Mission Adelante
30. Mark Smith | MyFreeBible
31. Troy Campbell | New Life City Church
32. Jon Purkey | Nexus Church
33. Alan Findley | Overflow Church
34. Danny Slavens | Real Church
35. Lori Roy | Reclaim KC
36. Alex Gilpin | Revive Church
37. George Westlake | Sheffield Family Life Center
38. Roy Moran | Shoal Creek
39. Brian Carline | Team Jesus “Rebuilding The Broken”
40. Marvin Daniels | The Hope Center
41. Eric Rochester | The Sending Project
42. Ray Jarrett | Unite KC
43. Cody Busick | Vineyard Church
44. Matt Adams | Westside Family Church
45. Randy Frazee | Westside Family Church
46. Mike King | Youthfront

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In two minutes or so, how did you come to faith?
2. How are you equipping people to have spiritual conversations with people who do not follow Jesus?
3. Can you describe your church's/organization's strategy for identifying open common leaders in your community? Do you have a similar strategy to identify evangelistic, passionate leaders in your church/Organization? If so, what does this process look like?
4. What is working in evangelism in your church/Organization? (i.e., What is most helping people share their faith? What is seeing the most people come to faith in Jesus?)
5. How do you as a church/Organization celebrate people coming to faith and sharing faith?
6. Please describe the correlation you see in your church/Organization between community service and Gospel conversations. Do you find that as community service increases, so do Gospel conversations?
7. What are the obstacles you are facing in mobilizing people for evangelism? (And how are you helping your people in overcoming these obstacles?)
8. Through these conversations, we hear fear is a predominant obstacle in the way of evangelism. How do you train people to overcome fear?
9. During the COVID-19 pandemic, how have your evangelism equipping and outreach strategies adapted? How do you see these adaptations or innovations continuing post-COVID-19 pandemic?
10. What would help you better equip your church/organization in evangelism?
11. When you dream, what does your church/organization look like in the area of evangelism in three years?
12. What is currently getting you excited about evangelism (e.g., a current testimony, effective resource, something new you have tried recently, etc.)?



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Given the invaluable insights gathered from our interviews with leaders, we humbly present the following recommendations for your thoughtful and prayerful contemplation.

Recommendations for Church Leaders:

- **Empower Through Training**

- Continue to emphasize the importance of training and equipping members.
- Consider regular workshops or sessions on effective evangelism, sharing personal testimonies, and navigating modern challenges in faith conversations.

- **Leverage Real-Life Testimonies**

- Prioritize the sharing of personal testimonies and real-life evangelism examples.
- Consider creating platforms or events where individuals can share their faith journey.

- **Foster Inter-Church Conversations**

- Participate in forums or roundtables where church leaders share best practices, learn from each other's experiences, and discuss common challenges.
- Explore opportunities for collaborative events or initiatives that harness the collective strengths of multiple churches.

- **Celebrate Past Successes**

- Highlight and share stories of past leaders or members who have been effective in community outreach.
- Use these stories as teaching tools to inspire and guide current members.

- **Deepen Core Spiritual Practices**

- Reinforce the importance of foundational spiritual practices such as prayer, Bible study, and community service.
- Encourage members to regularly engage in these practices, individually and collectively.

- **Address Potential Threats Proactively**

- Establish mechanisms to support new converts in their faith journey, ensuring they remain engaged and nurtured.
- Regularly assess and address any internal challenges or issues hindering the church's evangelistic efforts.
- Consider strategies to maintain unity and closeness in growing congregations, such as small group ministries or mentorship programs.

- **Leverage Technology and Modern Tools**

- Embrace technology as a tool for evangelism. Explore online platforms, apps, and other digital resources to reach a wider audience and facilitate engagement.



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Here are some valuable resources to support and enhance your evangelism efforts in Kansas City:

### Kansas City Evangelism Team

Inspired and supported by the Luis Palau Association and City Gospel Movements, the Evangelism Team (E-Team) is a group of strategic cross-sector Christian leaders in a city passionate about evangelism. They act as catalysts to keep evangelism a central part of the gospel movement through various means. Join us on the KC E-team to ensure evangelism's priority grows in Kansas City. For more information, contact Gary Kendall, Gary@lovekc.net.

### Bless Every Home

The **Bless Every Home** platform empowers Christians to become "Lights" in their neighborhoods. Participants commit to praying for, caring for, sharing the Gospel, and discipling homes in their communities. In Kansas City, nearly 4,000 "Lights" have signed up to adopt their neighborhoods, and this number continues to grow, suggesting potential viral growth through word of mouth.

### Alpha

**Alpha** is a highly regarded tool that equips Christians to understand the Good News better and provides outreach opportunities. It is considered one of the "best practices" nationally in evangelism. Alpha's approach emphasizes training evangelists, resourcing conversations, and prioritizing relationships within safety and friendship. A significant benefit of Alpha is that individuals reached through this experience often become motivated to share what has helped them with others in their circle of influence.

### Gloo

**Gloo** offers a new digital evangelism tool to connect spiritual explorers with local churches. The Reach section of the app facilitates connections between people seeking spiritual exploration and local churches that can provide guidance and support. Over twenty churches in Kansas City are already using this free service to equip their congregations to respond to spiritual explorers.



### Opening

- Pray for God's presence and guidance during times of intercession.
- Seek clarity and alignment of our hearts with God's will for evangelism.

### Thanksgiving

- Praise God for the testimonies and stories of transformation in Kansas City.
- Thank Him for the unity, collaboration, and passion among churches and organizations.

### Repentance

- Seek forgiveness for missed opportunities to share the Gospel.
- Repent for times when programs were prioritized over people or when unity was overlooked.

### Youth Engagement

- Intercede for the younger generation so that their hearts would be stirred towards God.
- Pray for sensitivity to their needs and perspectives and for their empowerment in evangelism.

### Cultural Engagement

- Ask for wisdom to navigate and engage with the changing cultural landscape.
- Pray for unconditional love, understanding, and effective communication of the Gospel to diverse communities.

### Resources and Equipping

- Pray for the provision of necessary resources, tools, and training.
- Seek God's guidance in equipping every believer to share their faith confidently.

### Collaboration

- Intercede for greater unity and collaboration among all believers in the region.
- Pray against any division or barriers and for collective strength in Kingdom work.

### Future

- Lift up future strategies and evangelism efforts to God.
- Ask for excitement, anticipation, and His divine direction in all endeavors.

### Closing

- Pray for a lasting imprint of this time of intercession on our hearts.
- Seek empowerment from the Holy Spirit to be light and salt in our communities.



## GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

We have provided these questions and conversation prompts for those who want to process the learnings with their teams and communities.

**Personal Reflection:** How do the findings resonate with your personal experiences and observations in your church or organization? Are there any surprises?

**Success Stories:** Can anyone share a personal success story or best practice related to one of the key themes identified in the report?

**Challenges:** What barriers or challenges have you encountered in addressing the areas highlighted in the report? How did you overcome them, or what support do you need?

**Youth Engagement:** Given the emphasis on youth engagement, how can we better involve the youth in our evangelism strategies and ensure they feel heard and represented?

**Collaboration:** How can we foster greater collaboration between churches and organizations, especially in areas where we've identified gaps or opportunities?

**Best Practices:** What best practices or successful strategies from other regions or communities can we adopt or adapt?

**Training and Equipping:** What specific training or resources would help equip leaders and members more effectively for evangelism?

**Diversity and Inclusion:** How can we ensure our evangelism efforts are inclusive and resonate with the diverse communities in our region?

**Feedback on the Report:** Are there areas in the report that require further clarification or deeper dives? What additional information or research would be beneficial for future strategic planning?

**Commitments:** What individual or collective commitments are we willing to make today?



### Methodology

In conducting this study, LoveKC deployed a qualitative researcher from the Emmanuel Gospel Center (EGC) in Boston with expertise in analyzing complex data. To enhance the efficiency and rigor of our analysis, they utilized artificial intelligence (AI) assistance to develop and execute Python code, aiding in data processing and organization.

This approach allowed us to adopt a multifaceted analytical strategy that integrated various techniques, including thematic analysis, keyword extraction, sentiment analysis, and a SWOT analysis. By doing so, we aimed to comprehensively explore the responses from our interviews, providing a deeper and more diverse understanding of evangelism in Kansas City.

**Thematic Analysis:** In pursuing a thorough understanding of evangelism in Kansas City, we conducted a rigorous thematic analysis of the interview data. Initially, our analysis aimed to identify the most prominent themes that naturally emerged from the responses. However, our commitment to comprehensive research led us to revisit the data to uncover additional insights.

Upon reevaluation, two themes that had not prominently surfaced initially—youth engagement and cultural engagement—came to the forefront. These themes, though not dominant, were moderately represented in the interviews. They revealed the significance of engaging with youth and addressing contemporary societal challenges through cultural initiatives in evangelism efforts.

This iterative data analysis process further enriched our comprehension of the multifaceted nature of evangelism, highlighting the importance of adapting our approach to account for emerging themes that might take time to become evident.

**Sentiment Analysis:** Our sentiment analysis revealed a prevailing positive outlook among respondents. Despite the inherent challenges of evangelism, interviewees expressed optimism, viewing these challenges as opportunities for growth and positive change. This optimism was consistently reflected across various analytical methods, affirming a constructive approach to evangelism.

**SWOT Analysis:** A SWOT analysis allowed us to identify specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within evangelism. Strengths included a history of effective community outreach and a commitment to core spiritual teachings. Weaknesses encompassed challenges in managing growing congregations and maintaining unity. Opportunities centered on training and equipping members, while threats were associated with societal issues and potential challenges post-conversion.

**Cross-Analysis Synthesis:** The culmination of these analyses underscored a consistent desire for practical resources and examples in evangelism. This shared emphasis on practicality was evident in the thematic analysis, individual question insights, and the SWOT analysis. Furthermore, sentiment analysis consistently revealed an overall positive and constructive attitude towards evangelism despite the challenges acknowledged by interviewees.

### Limitations

Underrepresentation of Region 5 (Wyandotte County, Kansas): An inherent limitation of this study is the underrepresentation of leaders from Region 5 in Kansas City. Of the eight interviews conducted in this area, seven were with organizational leaders, and only one participant held leadership roles in both an organization and a church. This underrepresentation of church leaders has implications for the comprehensiveness of our findings. Region 5, known for its racial diversity, might present unique perspectives and challenges in evangelism.

that are not adequately captured in our research. The scarcity of voices from this region could inadvertently lead to a bias in our analysis, possibly elevating the importance of specific evangelistic approaches, such as “cross-cultural” evangelism, while potentially overlooking innovative efforts and insights already present within Region 5.

This limitation underscores the need for a more inclusive approach in future research endeavors. It prompts us to acknowledge that our current findings might not fully encompass the nuances, experiences, and evangelistic efforts within this diverse region, ultimately impacting the generalizability of our conclusions and recommendations.

**Scope of the Study:** Another limitation relates to the scope of this study. While we engaged with a substantial number of senior pastors and leaders (46), it’s essential to recognize that this selection may not encompass the entire spectrum of views within the broader evangelistic community in Kansas City. Perspectives from congregation members, volunteers, and other stakeholders could provide additional insights beyond this research’s scope.

**Subjectivity of Qualitative Research:** As with any qualitative research, this study is subject to the inherent subjectivity in interpreting qualitative data. Thematic and sentiment analyses, though rigorous, are influenced by the researchers’ perspectives and the methodologies employed. While we have strived for objectivity and reliability, the qualitative nature of the study allows for varied interpretations.

Readers are encouraged to interpret the findings with these limitations in mind. While this report offers a comprehensive overview of evangelism in Kansas City, it is not exhaustive, and future research should aim to address these limitations for a more holistic understanding.





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