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Let Love Lead and Mission: A qualitative case study of PCG Youth missional interpretations of anti-GBV activism in Greater Accra (2025) in comparison with denominational mission framings.

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Acronyms

PCG- Presbyterian Church of Ghana

GBV-Gender- Based violence

IPV- Intimate Partner Violence

AACC – All Africa Conference of Churches

Foreword

This study was shaped, in part, by the commitment I have witnessed among fellow African young people working to making Africa a better home and future for all. Through the Let *Love Lead: End GBV Now* campaign, I encountered the determination of young people across different contexts who, while working from varied local realities, remained united in the struggle to end gender-based violence and to advance gender justice. Although this thesis engages only one bounded case, it was prompted by that wider witness and seeks to take seriously the contribution of youth to this cause.

I am grateful to the participants who shared their experiences and reflections for this research. Their willingness and openness made this study possible. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Protestant Theological University fraternity for the academic context within which this work was undertaken. I am especially grateful to Professor Henk de Roest for the opportunity to think through the study in its earlier stages, and to Dr. Ronelle Sonnenberg for her guidance and supervision during the writing of this thesis.

My thanks also go to the All Africa Conference of Churches fraternity, especially to the Executive Secretary for Youth, Mr. Brian Muyunga, and to the Let Love Lead campaign working group led by Rev. Stanley Toddisson. Their wider ecumenical commitment to the work of ending GBV formed an important background to this study.

> "*I see it as part of our mission and part of our ministry work. Mission is not just about preaching; it is also about addressing real-life issues that affect people. Activism in the church can help the church live out its message by protecting the vulnerable and helping people seek justice."- Mercy*

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Abstract

This study explores how PCG youth involved in the AACC *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now* campaign in Accra during 2025 interpret and enact anti-GBV activism in comparison with PCG's articulated missional vision. Using a qualitative case study design, it combines analysis of campaign and congregational reports and PCG mission and mission-and-evangelism texts, with empirical data from semi-structured interviews and one focus group with participating youth from four congregations. The analysis compares youth narratives with denominational mission framings to identify similarities and tensions and how these are negotiated in practice, and it considers possible implications for mission in relation to gender justice and youth agency in African church contexts.

Key words: GBV, youth agency, PCG, lived theology, mission, *Let Love Lead*, Pan-African ecumenism

1.2 Problem Statement

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive public health and human rights concern. Globally, WHO estimates that roughly 1 in 3 women experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime[1], and the WHO regional estimates indicate higher lifetime prevalence in the WHO African region.[2] In Ghana and wider West African contexts, African women theologians in the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians have documented multiple forms of violence against women and girls and have mobilized theological and practical interventions to minimize gender-based violence. [3]

[1] World Health Organization, "Violence against Women," fact sheet, March 25, 2024, accessed May 16, 2026, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women.
[2] World Health Organization, *Violence against women prevalence estimates*, 2018 (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2021), 55-56.
[3] Sylvia Owusu-Ansah, "The role of Circle women in curbing violence against women and girls in Africa," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, no. 2 (2016): a1594, https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v37i2.1594.

In response to GBV, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) has advanced the churches' campaign against sexual and gender-based violence under the slogan "*Let Love Lead: End GBV Now*," launched as an ecumenical initiative that emphasizes public engagement and youth leadership.[4] During 2025, youth-led activities were implemented across multiple African countries in alignment with campaign seasons such as International Women's Day and the Day of the African Child.

Let Love Lead: End GBV Now is the AACC's Pan-African Churches' Campaign Against SGBV, launched at the 12th General Assembly following youth calls at the 2022 All Africa Youth Congress for stronger church accompaniment on ending GBV. Its core objective is to empower young women and men in the African churches to advocate for ending SGBV and to promote gender justice and life affirming gender norms.[5]

In Accra, youth in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) particularly within Young People's Guild settings implemented activities including a youth forum combining choreodrama, panel discussion and dialogue on GBV prevention, reporting pathways, and biblical misinterpretations used to justify abuse; an International Women's Day colloquium on women's rights, leadership, male involvement, and youth responsibility; and 16 Days of Activism sessions using teaching, role-play, and Q&A on forms of GBV, healthy relationships, and referral or reporting pathways alongside other activities across the 2025 campaign calendar.

While these activities demonstrate significant youth engagement within church spaces, they also point to broader questions about how such engagement is understood within the ecclesial and missional life of the PCG.

PCG's official mission statements frame mission in broad, holistic terms,[6] while its mission- and-evangelism materials foreground evangelism, discipleship, church growth, and outreach structures.[7] What remains insufficiently understood is how PCG youth involved in *Let Love Lead*

[4] All Africa Conference of Churches, "12th General Assembly Launches AACC's New Campaign Against Gender Based Violence," November 29,2023, https://www.aacc-ceta.org/en/12th-general-assembly-launches-aaccs-new-campaign-against-gender-based-violence.
[5] All Africa Conference of Churches, "12th General Assembly Launches AACC's New Campaign Against Gender Based Violence."
[6] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Our Mission, Vision& Core Values," accessed May 14, 2026, https://pcgonline.org/our-mission-vision-core-values.
[7] Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG), "Department of Mission& evangelism, "accessed May 15 ,2026, https://pcgonline.org/department-of-mission-evangelism/.

interpret and describe their anti-GBV activism, and what emerges when those interpretations are read alongside PCG's missional vision. For instance, whether they describe it as part of Christian mission or public witness, as a complementary social ministry, or as a negotiated practice shaped by church priorities and authority structures. This gap matters because it bears on how churches conceptualize mission in relation to gender justice and on how youth agency is theologically recognized within ecclesial practice. This recognition may shape whether PCG youth anti-GBV leadership is legitimized and sustained in church practice, an area this research seeks to clarify.

This thesis focuses on PCG youth (18-35) involved in *Let Love Lead* Activities in Greater Accra during the 2025 campaign seasons of International Women's Day, Day of the African Child, International Youth Day, and 16 Days of Activism against GBV. The study will use report analysis alongside interviews with participating youth, read alongside PCG mission statements and strategic implementation documents as primary reference points.

Though centered on PCG youth, the study uses the AACC's Pan-African campaign framework to explore how youth-led gender justice activism is taken up, interpreted, and located within denominational mission practice, as illustrated by this PCG case.

Research Question

How do PCG youth involved in the AACC *Let Love Lead: End GBV* campaign in Greater Accra, interpret and enact anti-GBV activism in comparison with PCG's articulated missional vision, and what does this case suggest for thinking mission in African church contexts with regard to gender justice and youth agency?

Sub Questions

1. What forms of anti-GBV activism do PCG youth undertake under *Let Love Lead* in Greater Accra during 2025, and in which church or community settings do these practices occur?
2. How is PCG's missional vision articulated in official mission and vision statements and in mission-oriented policy and practice texts relevant to this study?
3. How do participating youth interpret their anti-GBV activism in relation to PCG's missional vision, and where do similarities, tensions, or negotiations emerge?
4. what implications does this case have for thinking about mission in African church contexts with regard to gender justice and youth agency?

1.3 Justification

This study contributes to mission studies and practical theology by examining how church youth involved in anti-GBV activism interpret their engagement theologically and missiologically and by comparing those interpretations with their church's stated mission; it does so through a case study of PCG youth involved in the *Let Love Lead* campaign in Accra during 2025. It brings into conversation debates in mission-theological discussions on *missio Dei*, public witness and mission as justice; practical and lived theology approaches that understand everyday Christian practice as theological reflection; and gender justice and youth agency perspectives that highlight how power, formation and authority shape faith-based practice. In doing so, it addresses a gap in research that often discusses church engagement with GBV without closely examining how youth interpretations of such activism compare with a specific denominational mission framework, and what it may mean if that relationship appears direct, indirect, uneven or weakly articulated.

The comparison is necessary because PCG's mission and mission-and-evangelism texts provide the denomination's operative definition of mission, shaping what is authorized and sustained in church life. Setting youth activism alongside them makes it possible to identify alignments, tensions and negotiations in how anti- GBV action is framed as mission within PCG.

For PCG and its ecumenical partners, this study seeks to clarify how anti-GBV activism is interpreted within youth ministry culture in relation to PCG's mission priorities and structures, including commitments to holistic ministry, evangelism and nurture, and advocacy or social service. It therefore seeks to support theological formation, leadership support for youth initiatives, and ongoing reflection on the relation between mission language and practice, including how mission language is translated into practice and how practice may, in turn, press for the reshaping of mission language when churches engage public issues such as GBV.

Given the formative role of churches and youth movements in shaping community norms, help-seeking and public discourse, a clearer understanding of how anti-GBV action is framed within faith communities has important implications for prevention strategies, reporting mechanisms, and survivor support in urban Ghana.

By focusing on Accra during the 2025 campaign seasons, the study examines how PCG youth interpret and enact anti-GBV activism in comparison with PCG mission language and priorities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarship on gender-based violence has increasingly drawn attention to the role of churches in shaping responses to violence, justice, and social transformation. At the same time, literature on youth agency, practical and lived theology, and mission raises wider questions about gender justice, ecclesial practice and Christian witness.

2.1 GBV as a social reality and ecclesial concern in Ghana and Africa

Gender-based violence remains a significant social reality globally and across African contexts, including Ghana. The World Health Organization treats violence against women as both a major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights, and its global estimates indicated that nearly 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. In this way, WHO provides a global prevalence frame that establishes the scale and persistence of the problem beyond any single national context.[8]

In the Ghanaian context, the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2022 provides nationally representative evidence through its domestic violence module making it possible to speak about the prevalence and patterns of violence on the national scale.[9] Dickson Ayebeng and Okyere then analyze the 2022 GDHS data with a specific focus on women's experiences of intimate partner violence and offering a more detailed account of its forms and the socio-demographic factors associated with it in Ghana.[10]

While GBV is the immediate concern in this study, the wider theological category is gender justice. GBV refers to concrete forms of harm, including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic violence. Gender justice points more broadly to questions of dignity, equality, participation, recognition and transformation of gendered norms and structures that sustain exclusion or violence. For that reason, anti-GBV activism is treated in this study as one concrete and urgent dimension of gender justice rather than as its whole meaning.

2.2 Religion, church practice and African theological engagement with GBV

[8] World Health Organization, "Violence against women."
[9] Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana Health Service(GHS), and ICF, Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2022 (Accra, Ghana, and Rockville, MD: GSS, GHS, and ICF, 2023), https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/PR149/PR149.pdf.
[10] Kwamena Sekyi Dickson, Castro Ayebeng, and Joshua Okyere, "Unveiling Shadows: Investigating women's experience of intimate partner violence in Ghana through the lens of the 2022 Demographic and Health Survey," PLOS ONE 19, no. 8 (2024): e0309564, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0309564.

Amenga-Etego moves the discussion in Ghana beyond prevalence by treating gender-based violence as a theological and ecclesial issue rather than only a social one. She argues that "the church is called upon to engage society at different levels." This shift places violence against women within the sphere of ecclesial witness and responsibility showing that the church teaching and practice has to be connected to the conditions in which women suffer abuse.[11]

Parsitau and Aura broaden the discussion by showing that faith actors in Africa occupy an ambivalent position in relation to violence against women and girls. They examine the ways in which faith communities may reinforce violence through teachings, sermons and practices, while also noting that these same actors are often well placed to challenge it through moral influence, care, and public engagement. They argue that religion "can be a critical resource in VAWG, but it can also be problematic," especially in African contexts where religion "informs and shapes the religious worldviews of millions of people."[12] This would place churches as contested sites in which violence and response are negotiated.

In discussing the work of Circle women,[13] Owusu Ansah further adds that African women's theology has exposed violence and also generated constructive forms of resistance. She notes that, since its inception, the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians has been active in "challenging and exposing cultural principles that undermine the dignity of women" and has also undertaken to unmask "disempowering religious teachings" and beliefs.[14]

2.3 Lived theology and youth agency

Practical theology has long been concerned with Christian practice, but more recent approaches have placed greater emphasis on lived religion and lived faith as sites of theological meaning. In this line of work, attention falls more directly on how faith is lived, interpreted, and negotiated in

[11] Rose Mary Amenga-Etego, "Violence Against Women in Contemporary Ghanaian Society, "*Theology &Sexuality* 13, no. 1 (2006): 23-46, https://doi.org/10.1177/1355835806069783.
[12] Damaris S. Parsitau and Ruth A. Aura, "The Role of Religion and Faith Actors in Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa: Challenges, Tensions and Promise," in The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies, ed. Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso and Toyin Faola (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 7, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7_27-1.
[13] The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians is a Pan-African association founded in 1989 by Mercy Amba Oduyoye that brings together African women theologians engaged in research, writing and advocacy on issues affecting African women, including gender justice, culture, religion, and social transformation.
[14] Owusu-Ansah, "Role of Circle Women," 2.

everyday contexts. This allows anti-GBV activism to be approached not only as participation, but also as a practice through which theological meaning is expressed and interpreted.

Ganzevoort and Roeland locate practical theology in praxis, understood as "the domain of lived religion," and insist that this focus turns attention to what people do rather than only to official religion, its doctrines or its institutions. They further describe praxis as a "a field, a patterned configuration of action, experience, and meaning."[15] This widens the field of theological attention beyond formal ecclesial speech and allows everyday practices, embodied experiences, and the meanings attached to them to be taken seriously. This makes it possible to approach youth participation in anti-GBV activism not simply as being involved in a church program but as a practice through which action, experience, and meaning are held together and interpreted within church life.

Aziz makes this broader practical theological discussion more specific within youth ministry by bringing the question of youth agency into more focus. Ganzevoort and Roeland provide a general practical theological account of faith as lived praxis. Building on this, Aziz asks how young people themselves are positioned within that praxis. He critiques the inherited evangelical model as "a sort of reach and teach model shaped by proselytization, discipleship and a Western concept of personal salvation nearly devoid of any communal responsibilities and context."[16] Against this, he argues that "youth ministry as practical theology must move into the area of public theology" by engaging "the youth as public theologians" whose social realities, spiritualties and interpretations matter for theology itself. In this way, Aziz refuses to treat young people only as recipients of church formation and also names them as theological agents and interpreters in their own right.

What these perspectives make possible is a reading of activism itself as a theological practice. If practical theology attends to the ways faith is lived and interpreted in practice, and if youth are approached as public theological actors, then anti-GBV activism can be examined not only in terms of what was done, but also in terms of how its meaning is narrated, justified and negotiated. This helps to shift attention from the activism considered only at the level of observable participation

[15] R.Ruard Ganzevoort and Johan H. Roeland, "Lived Religion: The Praxis of Practical Theology, " International Journal of Practical Theology 18 no. 1(2014):91, https://doi.org/10.1515/ijpt-2014-0007.
[16] Garth Aziz, "Youth Ministry as a Public Practical Theology: A South African Evangelical Perspective," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 78, no.1 (2022):1-2, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i1.7498.

to activism also as a site of theological reasoning, where questions of witness and ecclesial identity are worked out in relation to concrete experiences of violence and response.

Taken together, the works offer a framework for reading youth anti-GBV activism as lived theology. Ganzevoort and Roeland provide the broader practical theological account of praxis as action, experience and meaning. Aziz specifies it within youth ministry by drawing attention to young people as theological actors and interpreters in public life. The framework pays attention to the ways young people inhabit, narrate and negotiate faith in relation to concrete social issues.

2.4 Mission studies

Bosch treats mission as a category that has never stood still. In his discussion of paradigm changes in missiology, mission is set within a long history of being shaped and reshaped across different historical epochs rather than approached as settled concept.[17] He notes that "the transition from one paradigm to another is not abrupt,"[18] which means that contemporary mission thinking often carries older and newer frameworks at the same time. Mission, then belongs to a history of negotiation and reformulation and that matters for any contemporary discussion of mission, because it becomes difficult to assume in advance that one form of mission language is final or self-evident.

That wider argument is reflected in Bosch's account of the modern missionary crisis. In the introduction to *Transforming Mission*, he notes both the broadening of the term "mission" and the deepening criticism directed toward missionary enterprise itself.[19] The issue is not simply that the church must defend mission against criticism, but that mission itself has become a site of crisis and rethinking. Later he notes that, "the definition of mission is a continual process of sifting, testing, reformulating, and discarding."[20] Mission remains central, but its meaning has to be rethought in relation to changing historical conditions and theological challenges.

In chapter 12, Bosch argues that "mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God,"[21] and that mission is therefore to be understood first as God's movement toward the world

[17] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission,* 20th anniversary ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 192.
[18] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 192.
[19] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 2.
[20] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,*523
[21] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,*400

rather than as a project owned or generated by the church."[22] He adds, "there is church because there is mission, not vice versa."[23] Mission is so located first in the sending life of God rather than in the institutional projects of the church. The church participates in mission, but it does not possess it. That shift opens a wider field in which witness, service and engagement can be understood without narrowing mission to institutional survival alone.

Within this broader outlook, the relation between evangelism and justice is handled with similar care. Bosch argues that "although evangelism may never simply be equated with labor for justice, it may also never be divorced from it."[24] With this, justice is not allowed to replace evangelism, but neither does it allow evangelism to detach itself from questions of social life, oppression, and human dignity. Bosch cites the claim that, "There is no evangelism without solidarity; there is no Christian solidarity that does not involve sharing the knowledge of the Kingdom…"[25] In this account, mission is thus shaped by the dynamic relationship between witness and justice, rather than by the dominance of one over the other.

At the same time, Bosch offers a caution that keeps this widening of mission from becoming vague. He recalls a warning by Neil that "If everything is mission, nothing is mission," while also resisting a narrow definition of mission.[26] He notes that mission is "a multifaceted ministry' involving "witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualization, and much more."[27] This acknowledges the breadth of mission, affirming that it extends beyond proclamation alone, yet cannot be stretched indefinitely without losing its shape.

In recent decades, mission theology has increasingly reexamined its ambivalent past. Bevans and Schroeder acknowledge that mission is "not an innocent world" since it has often been entangled with cultural suppression, colonial assumptions, and harmful structures.[28] Yet they do not conclude that mission should therefore be abandoned. What requires revision is not mission as such, but

[22] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,*400
[23] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,*400
[24] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,*410
[25] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,*418
[26] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,*523
[27] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,*524
[28] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 56.

older understandings of mission shaped by Western superiority and disregard for local cultures and religious traditions.

This revision appears in two main directions. First, mission is re-grounded in the life and activity of God. Bevans and Schroeder draw on the language of the *missio Dei* to argue that "it is not so much that the church has a mission. Rather the mission has a church."[29] This shifts the emphasis away from mission as a church-centered project of expansion and toward participation in God's own movement toward the world. Second, mission is no longer reduced to conversion as narrowly understood. Witness and proclamation remain central, but mission is also described in relation to justice, contextual sensitivity, liberation and dialogue. [30]

> "Mission, as we will elaborate in the following chapter, cannot be reduced to one element, particularly to conversion efforts. It need to include committing oneself to issues of justice, peace and integrity of creation; it needs to proceed with cultural and contextual sensitivity; it needs to proclaim Christian convictions within the context of honest dialogue with the world's religions."[31]

That formulation is important because it keeps mission from being reduced either to evangelistic proclamation alone or to social action alone and presents mission as wider practice of witness, justice and dialogue. [32]

The authors then gather this broader vision under the language of prophetic dialogue. Mission, in their account begins as dialogue: with openness, respect, listening and a willingness to learn from the people and contexts in which one is present.[33] Mission as dialogue is a ministry of presence and respect, while mission as prophecy involves both the proclamation of the gospel and the critique of injustice. [34] Prophetic dialogue therefore names a form of mission that holds together dialogue and prophecy rather than separating them.

This tension is captured in the phrase "bold humility," which they take from David Bosch.[35] It points to a way of speaking and acting in mission that holds conviction together with openness to others. In this regard, prophetic dialogue offers a way of understanding mission as involving both

[29] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 57.
[30] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 58.
[31] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 58.
[32] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 58.
[33] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 59.
[34] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 59.
[35] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 61.

solidarity with those affected by violence and critique of the structures, silences and practices that sustain it.

The argument is further developed in their treatment of contextual theology. The shape of mission, they suggest, cannot be decided abstractly, because faithful witness depends on the situations in which Christians find themselves.[36] Mission is therefore shaped by contextual discernment in relation to concrete social realities. As they put it:

> "But as we listen and discern carefully, we will experience the need, even the duty, to speak out. We will find creative ways to present the Christian message and will be impelled to oppose injustice or advocate reform."[37]

This suggests that contextual mission involves more than just being attentive; it can also call for public witness, critique, and reform. The language of prophetic dialogue helps frame anti-GBV activism as a possible expression of mission in contexts where listening to lived realities and speaking against injustice remain closely related.

In *Together towards Life*, the World Council of Churches places mission within a life affirming horizon. It speaks of God's invitation into the "the life-giving mission of the Triune God" and into witness to "abundant life for all."[38] It also refuses to confine mission to the salvation of individuals alone, insisting that "the gospel is the good news for every part of creation and every aspect of our life and society."[39] Mission is therefore understood in relation to life, justice and the flourishing of creation. The document states:

> "The church is commissioned to celebrate life, and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, in the power of the Holy Spirit."[40]

Here, resistance to destructive realities is not treated as secondary to mission but as part of the church's calling itself.

The statement also reworks questions of agency and witness. Rather than speaking only of mission to those at the edges of society, it calls for a shift from "mission to the margins" to "mission from

[36] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 62.
[37] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 63.
[38] World Council of Churches, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (Geneva: WCC Publications,2013),5.
[39] World Council of Churches, *Together towards Life*, 5.
[40] World Council of Churches, *Together towards Life*, 4.

the margins," presenting people at the margins as "agents of mission."[41] At the same time, it retains evangelism within this wider frame by defining it as "a confident but humble sharing of our faith and conviction."[42] It presents an understanding of mission that does set justice against witness or public engagement against proclamation. They also open up space to think about anti-GBV activism as a possible form of life affirming public witness, particularly in contexts shaped by vulnerability, exclusion and violence.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design and case

This study uses a qualitative case study design focused on youth participation in the *Let Love Lead: End GBV* campaign within the PCG in Greater Accra during 2025. A qualitative approach is most suitable because the study is concerned with interpretations and meaning rather than with measuring prevalence or program effectiveness. The research asks how participating youth interpret their anti-GBV activism, what meanings they attach to it, where similarities, tensions or negotiations emerge when these interpretations are read alongside the missional vision of PCG, and what this case may suggest for rethinking mission in African church contexts in relation to gender justice and youth agency. The study combines document report analysis with semi-structured interviews.

Ghana was selected as the case study on both methodological and analytical grounds. Methodologically, it provides a feasible research setting because the study can be conducted directly in English, allowing interviews and document analysis to be carried out without the additional complications of translation. Analytically, the PCG offers a particularly suitable case because its missional vision is articulated in accessible denominational statements and mission-related documents, which are necessary for the comparison element of the study. In addition, compared with other participating contexts in the *Let Love Lead* campaign. Ghana offers a more appropriate degree of research distance, as I have not held the same level of prior leadership involvement there as in other settings. The case was therefore selected as a strategically bounded site and was not as representative of all campaign contexts.

[41] World Council of Churches, *Together towards Life*, 5.
[42] World Council of Churches, *Together towards Life*, 6.

Within this case, the study focuses on *Let Love Lead* activities carried out in Greater Accra during the 2025 campaign seasons. Greater Accra is a suitable site because it provides access both to campaign activity reports and to participants who were directly involved in those activities. It also allows the study to remain delimited enough for close qualitative analysis while still capturing a range of settings, including congregational, public, and digital forms of anti-GBV activism.

3.2 Data sources, participants and data collection

The study draws on three sources of data. The first source consists of campaign reports from the 2025 *Let Love Lead* campaign seasons in Greater Accra. These reports are used to map the activities that took place, the settings in which they occurred, and the forms of participation involved. The second source consists of selected PCG texts used as the denominational reference point for mission. These include the mission and vision statements of the church together with mission and evangelism materials that show how mission is framed and operationalized. Third, is the empirical component with semi-structured interviews with six participants who were involved in the campaign activities during 2025 in Greater Accra. These interviews form the main empirical material for examining how participating youth understood their anti-GBV activism, how they described faith and church responsibility, mission, and what emerged when their accounts were later read alongside PCG mission framings.

The combination supports the case study by allowing the research to move between practice, interpretation, and institutional language. Together, they make it possible to work at two levels. On the one hand, the reports and interviews help map the practical forms of anti-GBV activism. On the other hand, the mission documents and interviews make it possible to compare youth interpretations with denominational mission framings.

Participants were recruited purposively based on people who could speak directly to the campaign activities. The six interviewees were drawn from among those who had participated in or helped organize *Let Love Lead* activities in the different congregations. The purposive sampling was appropriate because the study seeks informed accounts of practice rather than general opinion. Participants were selected on the basis of their involvement in campaign activities. The final sample therefore does not claim to represent all PCG youth or all campaign participants. It provides a bounded set of voices within the case. The study originally aimed to conduct eight interviews,

six were ultimately completed. Nevertheless, the six provided rich and sufficient material to answer the research questions.

3.3 Data collection

The interviews were conducted in English via Microsoft Teams which made it possible to conduct interviews across distance while still allowing for real-time conversation and follow up. A semi-structured interview format was used to allow the study to address the themes of the research consistently across interviews while also giving participants room to speak in their own terms and raise issues that had not been fully anticipated in advance.

The campaign and congregational reports were collected as documentary material for mapping activities, settings, and patterns of participation. The PCG mission and mission-related texts were gathered as the denominational reference point for the study.

3.4 Data analysis

The interview data were analyzed thematically. The analysis began with a first cycle of close reading and coding. At this stage, descriptive coding was used to identify what participants were speaking about, while in vivo coding was used where particular phrases carried strong interpretive importance. Some of the first cycle codes included: speaking up, not keeping quiet, safe haven, Christ-centeredness, agents of change, human flourishing, not just about preaching, and everyday issue. These codes helped capture how participants named anti-GBV activism, church responsibility, mission, youth agency and continuity in their own terms.

A second cycle of analysis then compared and grouped these initial codes into broader patterns. For instance, codes such as speaking up, not keeping quiet, stigma, silence, and right channels were clustered into the theme of awareness and response. Codes such as love is the central command, demonstrating that love, justice, dignity, equality and liberation were brought together under moral and theological grounding. Codes such as not just about preaching, embedded in the expectations, not stand alone, and human flourishing contributed to the theme of church responsibility and mission. Other grouped patterns gave rise to themes of youth agency, church space, trust and uneven practice, and continuity, follow up and sustained church practice, all of which are discussed in the different sections of chapter six.

In the documentary material analysis, the campaign reports were read to identify what kinds of activities took place, in what settings they occurred, and how participation was organized. This material mainly served the descriptive work of mapping the practical forms of anti-GBV activism. The PCG mission and mission-related documents were analyzed to identify how mission is framed at the denominational level and how that framing is given practical emphasis in church life. Attention was given both to the broader theological language of the mission and vision statements and to the more repeated and structured emphases that appear in operational mission materials. This made it possible to distinguish between the wider missional vision of the church and the mission priorities that receive the strongest practical emphasis.

The two strands of analysis were then brought into conversation with one another. The study does not assume in advance that participating youth consciously formulated their anti-GBV activism in direct response to formal PCG mission policy. Rather, it first examines how youth interpreted their activism in their own terms and then compares those interpretations with the mission framings present in PCG documents. This comparative step made it possible to identify areas of similarities, tensions, and negotiation between youth activist practice and denominational mission language.

3.5 Ethics and positionality

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. Participants received an information sheet and gave informed consent. They were informed that participation was voluntary, that they could decline to answer particular questions, and that they could withdraw from the interview at any point. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, the study was not designed to elicit detailed survivor narratives. The interview questions focused on participation and interpretations of campaign activities, reflections of faith, church responsibility, and mission. Where participants referred to personal or sensitive experiences, these were not probed for further detail. This was done in order to reduce the risk of harm and to avoid turning the interviews into spaces of forced disclosure.

The interview material was anonymized. Participants names were removed and replaced with pseudonyms. Identifying details were either removed or generalized where necessary. The material was stored securely, and identifiable responses were not shared with campaign leadership or church leadership.

Biographically, I am an African Christian and may therefore share certain regional ecclesial and cultural sensibilities with participants, which can support contextual understanding. At the same time, I am not Ghanaian and not a member of the PCG, and I therefore approach the case as an outsider. I also serve on the technical working group supporting the AACC *Let Love Lead* campaign. This gives me familiarity with the campaign and may make access easier, but it also introduces the risk of social desirability bias, since participants may assume that the campaign expects a particular kind of response. For this reason, I approached participants clearly as a student researcher rather than as a campaign representative. I explained that participation would have no effect on campaign standing, church position, or access to resources.

In the study, reflexivity meant remaining attentive to how my own theological interests, campaign familiarity, and research aims could shape interpretation, especially in relation to links between youth activism and formal mission language. For that reason, the interpretation remained close to participants' own language before moving to broader comparison with denominational mission framings.

3.6 Limitations

The study has several limitations. First, it is based on a small qualitative sample of six participants within a bounded case in Greater Accra. It therefore does not claim statistical generalization to all PCG youth, all *Let Love Lead* participants, or all African church contexts.

Second, the study is limited to a specific set of activities carried out during the 2025 campaign seasons in Greater Accra. Other congregations, regions, or campaign contexts may show different patterns of youth participation, church response, and mission interpretation.

Third, the study's analysis of PCG mission is based on official and accessible denominational texts. It does not extend to the full range of lived and informal materials through which mission may also be communicated and practiced, such as sermons, workshops, congregational teaching, or other locally produced forms of guidance.

4. PCG MISSIONAL VISION FRAMINGS

Mission in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana is framed through a set of official documents, departmental priorities, and strategic documents that express both a broad theological vision and more specific operational emphases. This chapter explores these by examining the Church's

mission and vision statements alongside materials from the Mission and Evangelism Department, the crusade manual, and the *Growing in Leaps and Bounds* guidelines. Together, these texts show how mission is articulated in terms of evangelism, discipleship, church growth and holistic ministry.

4.1 Official missional vision of the PCG

At the level of official self-definition, the PCG presents mission in theological and holistic terms. Its mission statement begins with "the centrality of the Word of God" and the enabling work of the Holy Spirit, and describes the Church's calling as the pursuit of "a holistic ministry" directed toward bringing "all of creation to glorify God."[43] This gives PCG's missional identity a wide scope from the outset. Here mission is described as possibly having different dimensions; spiritual, ecclesial, social and biblical.

The rest of the statement shows what this means in practice. PCG states that this mission is pursued through mobilizing the whole church for prayer, improving church growth through evangelism and nurture, attaining self-sufficiency through effective resource mobilization, promoting socio-economic development through advocacy and social service, upholding the Reformed tradition, and cherishing partnership with the worldwide body of Christ.[44] At this level, mission is described broadly enough to hold together both the inner life of the church and its outward engagement.

The vision statement, however, gives this broad mission a more focused ecclesial direction. PCG seeks "to be a Christ-Centered, Self-sustaining and Growing Church."[45] The wording points to several emphases: Christ-centered places the Church's identity in explicit relation to Christ; self-sustaining introduces an economic and organizational concern; and growing signals that expansion remains a clear priority. If the mission statement presents a wide theological horizon, the vision statement translates it into a more structured institutional aim. The core values support this direction. Alongside the "centrality of the Word of God," values such as discipline, hard work, integrity, humility, unity, democratic principles, godly leadership and skills development, and sound moral principle indicate that mission is also understood as forming a certain kind of church community.[46] While the language is more Christological and ecclesial in its emphasis, it gives less

[43] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Our Mission, Vision& Core Values."
[44] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Our Mission, Vision& Core Values."
[45] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Our Mission, Vision& Core Values."
[46] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Our Mission, Vision& Core Values."

explicit attention to a pneumatological understanding of mission that highlights the Spirit's transformative and empowering activity within society.

4.2 Departmental and strategic framing

From the mission and vision statements giving the broad self-understanding of the church, the Department of Mission and Evangelism shows how that mission is organized in practice.[47] Its listed functions are framed mainly in terms of evangelism. The department is tasked with keeping "under review the whole evangelistic task of the Church," advising on methods of evangelism for congregations, groups, and individuals, encouraging evangelistic programs, guiding Bible study and prayer groups, and promoting the evangelistic work of other groups in the church.[48] This already starts to point to a shift of emphasis. The broad language of mission remains in the background, but the work of the department is described mainly in terms of evangelism, guidance and organization.

This emphasis is also reflected in the church's structures, though with some variation across levels. At the national level, the committees include Evangelism, Global Mission, and Specialized Ministries, while at presbytery, district and congregational levels the recurring structures are mainly Evangelism and Specialized Ministries.[49] For the purposes of this study, however, the analysis focuses on the aspects of departmental work that are most clearly and consistently elaborated in the documentary material. The department's major programs show the same emphasis in practical form. The School of Evangelism, retreats for agents and prayer center leaders, the Northern Outreach Programme, evangelism consultations, and television ministry indicate that mission is pursued through training, mobilization, outreach, and coordinated structures.[50]

The Mission Blueprint even makes it clearer. The department describes it as a "detailed Plan of Action" developed to build a holistic ministry and to mobilize the whole Church to accomplish the Great Commission.[51] Yet the four thematic areas of the Blueprint are quite specific: Evangelism

[47] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Department of Mission &Evangelism."
[48] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Department of Mission &Evangelism."
[49] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Department of Mission &Evangelism."
[50] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Department of Mission &Evangelism."
[51] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Department of Mission &Evangelism."

and Outreach, Discipleship-Making, Church Planting and Church Growth.[52] These are said to be "propelled by two engines," namely Spiritual Awakening and Renewal, and Strategic Management and Business Plan.[53] Here the language of holistic ministry remains, but the practical focus becomes narrower, the four areas now come to the fore.

The operational tools listed under the Blueprint follow the same fourfold pattern, with materials are arranged according to the four thematic areas which gives the departmental framing a clear sequence. In this way, mission is translated into an ordered program of action. The language of holistic ministry remains, but the practical emphasis falls most clearly on evangelism, discipleship, church planting, and church growth.

4.3 Evangelism, crusade, and church growth as mission practice

Among the operational materials examined in the study, the *National Crusade Manual* is useful because it provides a concrete example of how the church's departmental framing of mission is carried into practice.[54] From the beginning, the manual presents the annual crusade as part of PCG's effort to proclaim the gospel, mobilize the church, and promote revival and growth.[55] It links the crusade directly to the Church's vision of being a Christ-centered, self-sustaining, and growing church and presents evangelism as remaining "at the core" of the Church's calling.[56] The crusade is therefore presented as part of the Church's regular mission work.

The manual defines a crusade as a large scale evangelistic gathering aimed at publicly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, calling people to repentance and faith, bringing healing and deliverance, and integrating new believers into the wider church community.[57] Proclamation remains central, but the manual also gives attention to counselling, follow up, integration and discipleship.[58] Evangelism is therefore linked to integration into church life.

The structure of the manual points to this by showing in stages movement from prayer and preparation, through implementation, counseling, follow up, integration, discipleship, monitoring,

[52] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Department of Mission &Evangelism."
[53] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, "Department of Mission &Evangelism."
[54] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, National *Crusade Manual* (Accra: Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 2025).
[55] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *National Crusade Manual*, 9.
[56] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *National Crusade Manual*, v.
[57] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *National Crusade Manual*, 9.
[58] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *National Crusade Manual*, 21.

evaluation and sustaining the momentum.[59] The annual crusade is presented as one stage within a wider process. Prayer campaigns, leadership seminars, data collection, reporting, and replication at presbytery level all show that crusade work is expected to contribute to longer term church growth and mission planning.[60]

In the manual, the close connection between evangelism, discipleship, church planting and church growth is seen when it speaks of reaching the unreached, discipling new believers, strengthening the church, identifying church planting opportunities and sustaining momentum after the crusade itself.[61] Even here, the wider language of mission is seen when the manual refers to healing, safety, partnership and community transformation, but its main practical emphasis is directed toward evangelism, discipleship, integration and church growth.

4.4 Agenda Two Million

Growing in Leaps and Bounds introduces a more self-critical element within PCG's mission language. In its foreword, the document describes mission and evangelism are described as having remained "a church group affair for a very long time," while accountability for non-performance has been weak and loyalty to group activities has often been stronger than commitment to the church's central mission.[62] This suggests that the concern is not only limited growth in numbers, but also the uneven ownership of mission within church life. The problem, as the document presents it, is that mission has often remained confined to particular groups rather than being sustained as shared responsibility across the church.

The response proposed by the document centers on discipleship. Its foreword states that "the greatest need of the church today is discipleship" and that disciple-making "is and will remain the foundation of the Church Growth."[63] Growth remains important throughout the document, yet it is repeatedly tied to the making of disciples who can sustain the church's mission over time.

That emphasis shapes the wider structure of the guidelines. In the introduction, evangelism and discipleship are named as the "main drivers of growth in leaps and bounds."[64] Later, the goals

[59] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *National Crusade Manual*, 9-10.
[60] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *National Crusade Manual*, 12-24.
[61] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *National Crusade Manual*, 10.
[62] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *Growing in Leaps and Bounds* (Accra: Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 2024), viii.
[63] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *Growing in Leaps and Bounds*, viii.
[64] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *Growing in Leaps and Bounds*, xii.

describes church growth as an "inter-connected enterprise" involving developing disciples, soul-winning, and seeking the welfare of souls.[65] This gives the document a particular kind of missional logic. Growth is still the stated objective, but it is now approached through formation, training, accountability, and coordination across the church's ministries. Mission is therefore here looked at less as a single evangelistic effort and more of a process of producing what the document repeatedly calls "fruit bearing Christians."[66]

At the same time, the emphasis on expansion remains evident. The document is tied directly to the target of two million members and one thousand new congregations by 2028.[67] A tension remains the in the document. It criticizes weakly sustained mission practice and places discipleship at the center of renewal, yet it also remains strongly oriented toward numerical growth, expansion and church planting. Growth remains an important goal, though it is now presented as depending on the formation of disciplined and accountable believers. Here, *Growing in Leaps and Bounds* sharpens a pattern already visible in the earlier PCG texts where mission is described in broad terms, but its practical direction is shaped mainly by evangelism, discipleship and growth.

4.5 Dominant emphases, tensions and silences

Read together, these PCG texts present mission in broad and theological terms, but the practical emphasis is not evenly spread across everything they name. In the official mission statement, mission is framed through the Centrality of the Word of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, prayer, holistic ministry, socio-economic development, advocacy and partnership. In the departmental and strategic texts, however, the practical emphasis becomes more focused. Evangelism, discipleship, church growth and to a lesser extent, church planting become the most visible organized expressions of mission.

The broader language of mission does not disappear. The documents still retain references to holistic ministry, healing, welfare, advocacy, safety, and community transformation. Still, these concerns are not developed with the same consistency as the recurring emphasis on evangelism, discipleship, and growth. A difference begins to show, then, between the breadth of mission in principle and the priorities that receive the strongest practical form.

[65] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *Growing in Leaps and Bounds,* 1.
[66] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *Growing in Leaps and Bounds,* xviii.
[67] Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *Growing in Leaps and Bounds,* 65.

A second pattern lies in the way growth is framed. Growth remains a clear and repeated goal across the texts, yet the route to growth is not presented in the same way in every document. In some, it is closely tied to evangelistic outreach and church expansion, while in others, especially in *Growing in leaps and Bounds*, it is linked more firmly to discipleship, accountability and the formation of fruit- bearing Christians. Growth remains central as a structured ecclesial project.

A tension begins to appear at this point. The Church's mission is described broadly enough to include social concern, advocacy, and the welfare of communities, but the texts that give mission its clearest operational form place their strongest emphasis on evangelism, discipleship, expansion and measurable growth. This is not a contradiction so much as an unevenness in emphasis. The broader vision remains in place, while most actionable mission language is growth oriented.

There are also silences in these texts that matter for this study, Gender-based violence is not explicitly developed as a missional concern in its own right, even where the broader language of care, welfare and transformation could make space for such a concern. Youth also appear mainly within organizational or generational structures, rather than strategic agents of mission whose own understanding of mission might reshape or extend denominational priorities. These silences do not suggest that youth anti-GBV activism is irrelevant to PCG mission, but they may help to explain why the relationship between the two requires closer attention.

5.FORMS AND SETTINGS OF ANTI-GBV ACTIVISM IN GREATER ACCRA

This chapter is based on the analysis of campaign and activity reports from the 2025 *Let Love Lead* campaign seasons in Greater. These reports show that anti-GBV activism took various forms, including church seminars, youth discussions, creative performances, online sensitization, and public outreach depending on the campaign season and the setting in which it was organized. The chapter examines the material by asking what was done, where it took place, and how participation was structured.

5.1 Campaign settings

The campaign activities were carried out in a range of settings. Some took place within congregational life itself, as in Resurrection, Bethlehem, Love, Nazareth and Redemption congregations, where they were organized through youth fellowships, church seminars, colloquia

and awareness sessions. In these settings, the church served as a space for education, discussion, performance, and moral reflection on violence, dignity, and responsibility.

At the same time, some activities extended beyond the internal life of the church into the wider community settings. This can be seen in the outreach at the Tsuibleoo taxi station where drivers, traders, commuters and other community members were engaged through discussion, flyer distribution and one on one conversations.[68] Some activities were extended through digital platforms, including livestreaming, social media sharing, and circulation of campaign flyers and messages. The campaign therefore moved across congregational, public, and online spaces allowing anti-GBV messaging to circulate both within church communities and beyond them.

The settings also varied across the campaign seasons. For international Women's Day, the activities in Resurrection and Bethlehem were organized as church-based seminar and colloquium spaces focused on rights, equality, empowerment, and violence against women and girls.[69] The Day of the African Child at Resurrection introduced a more age-specific setting centered on children and adolescents and linked anti-GBV concerns to child rights, sexual responsibility and protection within schools and communities.[70] International Youth Day appeared in more clearly youth-centered spaces, including a junior youth service at Redemption and youth-led awareness activities at Nazareth.[71] During the 16 Days of Activism, the settings widened further, combining a church based awareness session at Love congregation and digital sensitization and public outreach.

The range of settings suggests that the campaign was not limited to internal church teaching but also sought to place anti-GBV concerns within wider ecclesial and public spaces.

5.2 Forms of anti-GBV activism

[68] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–Churches' Campaign against SGBV in Africa:16 Days of Activism against GBV 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report*, internal campaign report, December 2025, 25.
[69] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–Churches' Campaign against SGBV in Africa: International Womens' Day 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report*, internal campaign report, March 2025, 4-5.
[70] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–Churches' Campaign against SGBV in Africa: Day of the African Child 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report*, internal campaign report, June 2025, 4.
[71] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–Churches' Campaign against SGBV in Africa: International Youth Day 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report*, internal campaign report, August 2025, 7.

The activities across the campaign seasons took different forms depending on the target group, the occasion, and the setting in which they were organized. Across the Greater Accra activities, at least four forms stand out: educational and dialogical activities, creative and performance activities, testimonial and survivor centered spaces, and digital sensitization.

One major form was educational and dialogical. Several activities were organized around seminars, colloquia, panel discussions and awareness sessions that aimed to inform participants about GBV, its forms, its causes and the resources available for prevention and response. This was reflected in the International Women's Day activities at Resurrection and Bethlehem, where discussions focused on equality, empowerment, legal, social and theological dimensions of GBV.[72] A similar educational form took place in the Day of the African Child seminar at Resurrection, which combined child rights and advocacy,[73] and in the International Youth Day sessions at Redemption and Nazareth, where young people were taught about the constitutional protections against GBV and reporting processes.[74] The educational form also created space for questions, reflection on social norms and discussion of how GBV is recognized and addressed.

The second form was creative and performative. At resurrection, the choreodrama *Shattered Silence* presented the realities of abuse, silence, support, and resistance through staged characters and familiar social situations.[75] In other settings, poetry, spoken word, role play, and drama were also used as part of the campaign. These forms approached anti-GBV concerns through narrative and performance rather than through teaching or discussion alone. They therefore added a different communicative form to the campaign and complemented the more informational and dialogical activities.

The third form was testimonial and participatory. Some activities gave participants room to share experiences, concerns and questions and respond to the themes discussed. At Nazareth, the storytelling session created space for survivors to speak, some openly and others anonymously,

[72] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–International Womens' Day 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report,* 4-5.
[73] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–Day of the African Child 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report,* 4.
[74] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–International Youth Day 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report,* 6-7.
[75] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–International Womens' Day 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report,* 4.

about experiences of GBV.[76] At Love congregation, role plays and question and answer segments encouraged reflection on relationships, warning signs and possible responses.[77] Interactive discussion also featured in panel sessions and workshops, where participants raised concerns about stigmatization, parental responsibility, school injustices, and silence in church settings.

The fourth form was digital and public sensitization. Some activities were extended through livestreams, online posts, and social media circulation. Nazareth's online awareness drive and digital education carried out by the youth members suggest that anti-GBV activism was also pursued through mediated forms of communication. Public outreach extended the campaign further. At the Tsuibleoo taxi station, anti-GBV awareness was carried into an everyday community setting through flyer distribution and discussions, taking the campaign into ordinary public life.[78]

5.3 Patterns of participation and organization

A clear pattern across the reports is that youth were visible not only as participants but also in organizing and implementing the activities. In several congregations, the campaign was carried through youth structures such as the Young People's Guild, Young Adults' Fellowship, and Junior Youth groups. Youth leadership was therefore present, especially in mobilizing participation and shaping the immediate setting of the events.

At the same time, the youth involvement was often supported by clergy, professionals and other resource persons. Ministers, lawyers, counselors and educators appeared as facilitators or panelists, suggesting a collaborative pattern of organization.

The activities were also structured to invite active involvement through questions, role play, and testimonials. This suggests that the activities allowed young people to take part both as listeners and as contributors. Taken together, these patterns suggest that anti-GBV activism in Greater Accra was varied in form, collaborative in organization, and directed both to church communities and to wider public.

[76] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–International Youth Day 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report,* 7.
[77] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–16 Days of Activism against GBV 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report,* 23.
[78] All Africa Conference of Churches, *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now–16 Days of Activism against GBV 2025 Intra-Country Campaign Report,* 25.

6. DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

While the previous chapter mapped the forms and settings of anti-GBV activism in Greater Accra, this chapter focuses on how participating youth themselves understood that involvement. As outlined in the methodology chapter, the interview material was analyzed thematically, and six main themes emerged from the process. These themes structure the chapter: awareness and response, moral and theological grounding, church responsibility and mission, youth agency, church space and trust, and continuity in church practice. The chapter therefore examines the meanings the participants attached to the activities, the language they used to describe it, and the ways they related it to faith, church life, and mission.

6.1 "Not to keep quiet": From awareness to response

This theme drew together codes such as speaking up, not keeping quiet, silence, stigma, reporting, and what to do, all of which pointed to a recurring understanding of anti-GBV activism as helping people move from silence toward awareness, response and support. Participants repeatedly described the activities as helping people recognize gender-based violence, question its normalization, and find ways of speaking and acting where silence had previously prevailed.

Several participants described the activities in these terms. Grace explained that the colloquium tried to make people aware of actions that perpetuate violence and to challenge the assumption that "these things are normal." Mercy used similar language, describing the youth session as an opportunity to help participants "speak up" and not "suffer alone in silence." Patricia also emphasized that the training aimed to help young people understand that GBV is real, that many people are going through it, and that they need to know what to do when a friend or schoolmate confides in them. In Nana's account, the activity opened the participant's eyes not to remain silent when abuse is seen in the community. Kwame adds a further dimension by describing the campaign as both preventive and corrective, explaining that it helped young people know "what to avoid doing, and what to do if it happens to any of them."

This movement from awareness to response also appeared in the way participants spoke about stigma and fear. Several noted that victims often remain silent because they fear being tagged, exposed, or not believed. Mercy, for example, said that many participants had kept things to themselves because they did not know how others in the church or in their families would see them. Kwame also pointed to the difficulty of speaking when the abuser is an elder or breadwinner,

and disclosure may threaten one's security. In these accounts, the issue was not only violence itself but also the social conditions that make silence seem safer than disclosure.

What stands out in the responses is that awareness was not treated as an end in itself. The interviews suggest that participants understood anti-GBV activism as working on two levels at once. On one level, it named violence more clearly by widening people's understanding of what counts as GBV and by challenging the tendency to treat it as normal or private. On another level, it tried to interrupt the habits of silence that allow violence to continue unchecked. This is why participants kept linking awareness to speaking up, reporting, counselling, and protection. For them, the value of the activities was more than learning new information and included making it possible for people to recognize abuse, to take it seriously, and to respond in ways that might not have seemed possible before.

It becomes also evident that participants associated awareness with a sense of responsibility. Once violence is recognized and understood as such, maintaining silence becomes increasingly difficult to justify. In this regard, the participants valued the activities both for the information they provided and for the way they encouraged people to respond differently to situations they experience, witness or hear about from others.

6.2 "Love is the central command": Moral and Theological grounding

This theme developed from codes such as love is the central command, demonstrating that love, justice, dignity, equality, liberation, and image of God. Together, these pointed to the moral and theological language through which participants made sense of anti-GBV activism. Rather than treating it as something separate from Christian faith, they often described it as part of what Christian life and responsibility require in the face of suffering and injustice.

For some participants, love was the starting point. Patricia described the campaign as directly connected to Christian faith and mission because "love is the central command," and because the Bible teaches believers to love their neighbors as themselves. Nana expressed a similar view, saying that when taking up the activity, "all I could see in it was love," and that speaking about gender-based violence was a way of "demonstrating that love." Mercy also located the issue within "the values of love, justice, and care that Christianity teaches." In these responses, anti-GBV activism was understood as one way of living out Christian love in relation to those who are harmed, silenced or made vulnerable.

Other participants placed stronger emphasis on justice and dignity. Grace grounded the work in the belief that all are created in the image and likeness of God, and that "nobody is superior to another." From that perspective, anti-GBV activism became part of defending the dignity and welfare of those whose lives are diminished by abuse or by silence around it. Michael used even more explicit theological language. Drawing on liberation theology and Luke 4, he spoke of faith as that which should "liberate" those in captivity and even described Jesus as "a gender activist." He also linked the church's advocacy to Micah 6:8 and to the responsibility to seek justice and oppose violence and inequality. The theological language here is stronger than in some responses, but the direction is similar that anti-GBV was taken as growing out of faith rather than separate from it.

Kwame adds another important aspect by grounding the issue in Christian expression of equality. Referring to Paul's teaching that there is neither male nor female in Christ, Kwame argued that faith should not rule out not only physical and sexual violence, but also those patterns of mental and emotional bullying that deny women equal participation in church life. In this account, GBV includes more than acts of assault. It also reaches into the ordinary ways women may be denied leadership, treated as less capable, or pushed aside because of assumptions about gender. This broadens the theological interpretation of anti-GBV activism by emphasizing not only responses to harm, but also the need to address structural inequalities embedded within both church and society.

What is noticeable across the responses is that participants did not all draw on faith in the same way. For some, the dominant language was love, care, and concern for the neighbor. For others, the stronger emphasis fell on justice, dignity, equality, or liberation. This difference is important because it shows that anti-GBV activism was not grounded in single theological formula. Rather, the participants drew on different elements of Christian moral language to make sense of the same concern. Faith language therefore appears here as varied but not disconnected. It provided different ways of expressing why violence is wrong and why Christians should not remain indifferent to it.

The responses also suggest that faith functioned as more than personal motivation. It gave participants a way of interpreting the issues itself. Through the language of love, justice, dignity, equality, and liberation, gender-based violence was not understood only as a social or legal problem. This matters because it means the campaign was not just bringing a public issue into

church space. Faith provided a moral framework through which violence could be recognized as unacceptable, silence could be questioned, and response could be understood as necessary.

6.3 "Not just about preaching": Church responsibility and mission

Codes such as not just about preaching, embedded in the expectations, human flourishing, total well-being, safe haven, and should not stand alone pointed to the different ways participants connected anti-GBV activism to church responsibility and mission.

When participants spoke about anti-GBV activism in relation to the church, they mostly described as belonging to the church's responsibility rather than something marginal to Christian life. In their accounts, the church is expected to protect, care, guide, and speak against injustice. That connection, however, did not appear in one single form. Some participants named anti-GBV activism directly as mission or ministry. Others spoke more through the broader moral and theological obligations of the church. Still others raised the questions of where such work fits within the church's actual structures and departments.

For some, the link to mission was stated very plainly. Grace argued that "everything that is justice belongs to the church's concern" and that the church is called to ensure that "nobody is abused and nobody's rights are violated. Mercy spoke in similarly direct terms, describing anti-GBV activism as part "our mission" and "our ministry work," because mission is "not just about preaching" but also about "addressing real-life issues that affect people." Nana also challenged a narrow separation between evangelism and anti-GBV activism, arguing that one cannot encounter violence and say, "I am only going to preach about Christ." In these responses, anti-GBV activism was understood as one way the church lives out its message against injustice and suffering.

Other participants made the connection less through formal mission vocabulary and more through the wider expectations they attached to church life. Grace, for example, said that GBV is not directly mentioned in the mission or vision as far as the participant knew, yet still insisted that it is "embedded in the expectations" of being a Christ-centered church. Patricia took a similar view linking the campaign to Christ-centeredness, love, empathy and the church's calling to be a "safe haven." What is significant in these responses is that the absence of direct wording did not lead participants to conclude that anti-GBV work falls outside the church's concern. Instead, they drew the connection through the church's broader theological self-understanding. The work belonged

because love, care, dignity and protection were already taken to be part of what the church is meant to embody.

Michael and Kwame spoke not only about whether anti-GBV activism belongs to mission, but also reflected on where it should be located within the church's mission practice. Michael interpreted the PCG mission statement through the language of holistic ministry and argued that the "total well-being" of persons, including dignity and safety, belongs within the mission of the church. The participant also brought in the language of "human flourishing," using it to frame anti-GBV work as part of the church's concern for the whole person. Michael did not stop at affirmation but distinguished between broad mission statement and the way mission is operationalized through departments, arguing that GBV work is especially visible in Development and Social Services rather than in the more dominant areas of evangelism, church planting, church growth and discipleship. Kwame offered a related but different move. Rather than locating the issue mainly in a social-service department, the participant argued that anti-GBV work "should not stand alone" but should be integrated into evangelism and discipleship. In that response, "evangelism should teach equality, and discipleship should form boys and girls into patterns of Christian life that do not bully or abuse another gender."

These differences are important because they show that the participants were not all relating anti-GBV activism to mission in the same way. There was broad agreement that the church cannot ignore the issue, and that anti-GBV work belongs within its calling, but the form of that belonging varied. Some used direct mission language, for example by naming the work as part of church's mission or ministry. For others, it was described through Christ-centeredness, justice, holistic care, or church responsibility, and others drew attention to where such work is actually located in church structures. The difference, then, is less about whether anti-GBV work belongs to the church and more about how its place within the church's mission is understood.

It also appears that participants affirmed the connection while recognizing its incompleteness. Michael wanted the church's anti-GBV position to become more visible and explicit. Grace felt the issue should become "one of the priorities," because when something is not prioritized, it can remain hidden until it escalates. Patricia thought the work should not remain mostly at the head office, but should be taken up more fully by congregational committees. Nana described it as an "every day issue" rather than a one-time program. These responses suggest that, for participants,

the question was not only whether anti-GBV activism fits the mission of the church. It was also whether the church gives that fit enough visibility, continuity, and institutional weight.

Taken together, the responses show that the relationship between anti-GBV activism and mission is present, but it is not expressed in one single way. Participants repeatedly described the work as consistent with the church's calling, yet they did not all explain that consistency in the same terms. Sometimes, it appeared as direct mission language, sometimes through broader theological expectations and sometimes through debate where in the church's practical life the work should be located. They suggest that youth interpretations do not simply mirror official mission language, but neither do they stand apart from it. Rather, they show a relationship that includes affirmation, extension, and questioning at the same time.

6.4 "Agents of change": Youth and responsibility

Several related codes came together here, including planned and executed, entirely youth-led, peer educators, driving force, agents of change, lead a mental shift, social media, technology-facilitated GBV, and approval came together under the broader theme of youth agency. Although the codes point to different activities and forms of involvement, they belong together because they all describe the ways young people were understood as initiating, carrying, extending, and negotiating anti-GBV activism within and beyond church life.

Youth agency appeared strongly across the interviews. Young people were not described only as recipients of teaching or as beneficiaries of church programs. Instead, participants often spoke of them as organizers, advocates, and peer educators who were directly involved in the campaign. The anti-GBV activism was described as something actively carried and shaped by the youth and not simply as something done for them. It was frequently presented as young people sharing responsibility for initiating conversations, mobilizing participation, spreading awareness, and helping others respond to violence.

In some interviews, this agency appeared in the organization of activities. Grace described the colloquium as something planned and executed by the Young People's Guild, with the youth themselves developing the concept and carrying the program through after receiving approval from church leadership. Michael gave a similar impression of the International Women's Day event, describing it as "entirely youth led" and emphasizing the level of investment and creativity the youth organizers brought into it. Nana also spoke as the main person behind the program in that

congregation, choosing the format, shaping the target group, and bringing in the resource persons. These accounts suggest that youth are active participants in anti-GBV activities, taking initiative in how they are imagined and carried out.

Other interviews placed more emphasis on youth as advocates and multipliers of the campaign. Patricia described the training of selected junior youth as peer educators or ambassadors who could continue the work after the initial event. In that case, youth agency was connected to continuity and transmission; the campaign would not end with one training session, but would be carried onward by those who had received the message and were expected to pass it on. Kwame also shared in this view by especially sharing about young people taking an affirmative stand against gender-based violence and helping others understand what it is, what its consequences are, and what to do if it occurs. Here, the youth agency, apart from organization, involved public witness by spreading awareness to others.

The interviews also show that participants often linked youth agency to the idea of responsibility. Several spoke of young people as having a duty not to remain silent when violence is seen or experienced. Grace stressed that rights "go hand in hand with responsibility" and that young people should protect themselves and also help protect others. Nana similarly described youth as the "driving force" of change and insisted that they should not keep quiet when they see abuse. Kwame encouraged youth to "boldly stand" against gender-based violence and to use opportunities such as *Let Love Lead* to carry the message further. In these responses, youth agency is framed as an ethical responsibility to act, support, report, and educate.

Another aspect of youth agency was its connection to challenging long-held assumptions from the community members. This appears most clearly in Michael, who argued that the role of the youth is "to lead a mental shift" and to lead conversations that help people "unlearn certain things and relearn others." He went on to say that there are people "ahead of us who may not have picked up the things we are now championing," and that this gives young people "a huge task" of helping others learn. Nana described youth as "agents of change" and linked their role to the need to challenge "harmful cultural norms" that continue to affect human dignity. Mercy also described youth as able to "challenge harmful norms and promote change" within both church and society. Kwame adds that this work also involves confronting cultural practices and gender inequalities that still shape the Ghanaian setting. The responses suggest that youth agency was taken in terms

of questioning what has long been treated as normal and opening up different ways of thinking and acting.

A key feature of the interviews is how participants connect youth agency to contemporary forms of communication and influence. Several referred to social media, peer networks, and public speech as resources available to young people. Mercy emphasized that youth are close to current societal issues and can use their spaces, platforms, and creativity to educate others and promote change. Nana also saw the youth as active on social media and therefore able to spread awareness beyond the immediate church setting. Michael also argued that the campaign needs a stronger digital agenda if it is to remain visible and effective in the present context. This suggests that youth agency was understood through formal church leadership and more importantly the young people's generational position, their communication capacity and their public reach.

Digital space then appeared in a double way; one as a tool of advocacy and second as a setting in which violence now also occurs. Grace drew attention to "technology-facilitated gender-based violence" and spoke about cyberbullying, trolling, and dehumanizing speech online, adding that if young people step back from such behavior, "it will help all of us have a safer environment, even on the internet." This adds an important dimension to youth agency that the youth, apart from using social media to promote awareness, they are also among those whose conduct helps shape whether the digital space becomes safer or more harmful.

Youth agency is also not presented as unlimited or independent. In several cases, it was exercised within existing church structures and with varying forms of adult or institutional support. Michael noted that the Day of the African Child event required older youth or adults to take more responsibility because the children themselves could not easily participate in planning meetings. Kwame described how branch executives had to approve and support the activity before it could be organized. Nana also referred to support from a church leader in bringing the program together. The details suggest that youth agency in the campaign is well present but shaped through relationships and negotiation. It depends on collaboration, approval structures and support networks than full independence from the church.

Youth agency in this case was described through participation, initiative and responsibility at the same time. Young people appeared in the responses as organizers, peer educators, advocates and carriers of the message beyond their events. Their role included speaking up, helping others

respond to violence, challenging harmful norms, and using public and digital spaces to extend awareness. This agency was also exercised through existing structures, approval processes and collaboration with other church leaders. Overall, youth agency appears active and visible, while still being shaped by the wider institutional and relational life of the church.

6.5 "A safe haven"? Church space, trust and uneven practice

This subsection drew on codes such as safe haven, first safe place, conducive environment, main church setting, more visible and explicit, confidentiality, fear of disclosure, and trusted reporting channels. These codes collectively reflected a gap between the church as a hoped-for place of refuge and the uneven trust participants described in practice.

The question of church space appears in the interviews with both hope and unease. On the one hand, several participants described the church as a place that should offer safety, care, counsel, and protection. Patricia said that "the church is supposed to be a safe haven" and somewhere people can run to for solace and help. Nana also mentioned that the church should be the "first place" where people bring their problems. Grace also spoke about the need to create a "conducive environment where everyone feels safe" and linked this to speaking up, reporting and protecting one another. In these responses, the church is imagined as a space where people should not be left alone with violence or fear of naming it.

At the same time, participants did not describe this safety as something already secured in practice. Patricia noted that in the "main church setting" these issues are not always openly discussed, and that they are more often taken up in group spaces such as youth fellowships. Michael also noted a concern by noting that the church could be much "more visible and explicit" in its stance, especially in making it clear that there is zero tolerance for GBV." Grace also suggested that unless the wider church takes up the issue, it can remain something carried mainly by the youth rather than something fully owned by the church as a whole. These point to a gap between the church as an imagined refuge and the church as an institution whose public and ordinary life does not always give the issue enough visibility.

This tension is also evident in the interviews which highlight confidentiality as a concern. Mercy for example described a case in which a woman reported abuse to a church counsellor, only for the matter to spread through the church after it was shared further. For Mercy, this was a point at which "the church did not do well," because what was needed was advice, support and

confidentiality. Nana also shared closely related concern when describing participants who were hesitant to attend because they feared the issue would become personal and stigmatizing and when recounting a case in which someone had previously spoken out but "the matter was not handled confidentially. From both interviews, the problem is not simply that violence exists but that also people may hesitate to seek help if church space is not experienced as trustworthy.

Fear of disclosure also appears in a broader way. Mercy spoke about participants who had kept things to themselves because they feared how the church or their families would see them. Kwame added that speaking can be especially difficult when the abuser is an elder or breadwinner, because disclosure may threaten one's place in the household. Grace, by contrast, tried to respond to this fear by stressing the role of the church's counseling unit and the need for trusted reporting channels. The issue highlighted was then whether those affected believe they can speak within church-related spaces and still be protected rather than exposed.

The responses suggest therefore a mixed picture. Participants continued to speak about the church as the place where safety, love, and protection ought to be found. Yet they also pointed to weak visibility, uneven discussion, problems of confidentiality, and uncertainty about where people can safely turn. The church space, then, was described less as a settled reality and more as an expectation under pressure. The hope that the church can be a refuge is clearly present, but so is the sense that this hope still depends on whether the church becomes more explicit on its stance against GBV, more trustworthy and more consistent in practice.

6.6 "Not an event, but a process": continuity, follow up and sustained church practice

The theme of continuity and sustained practice emerged from codes such as not an event but a process, continuous engagement, everyday issue, what comes next, follow-up, congregational committees, and day-to-day life of the church. They pointed to the question of how anti-GBV activism could be carried beyond the initial campaign and given a more regular place in church life.

Several participants spoke beyond the activities they had taken part in, reflecting on what should follow. Their responses focused on continuity, follow-up, and whether anti-GBV work could become part of everyday church practice rather than being limited to specific events or campaign moments.

This concern was most highlighted by Michael, who said that the campaign is "not an event" but a "process," and further describing it as "continuous engagement and continuous advocacy" and stressed that "that cycle should not be broken." The participant also questioned whether visible acts on selected days were enough and argued that anti-GBV work should be incorporated into the day-to-day life of the church. Here, the question was less about the church's ability to hold a campaign and more about whether the issue was integrated into everyday practice.

Nana made a similar point, but from the level of local church and youth life. The participant described GBV as "an everyday issue" and "not a one-time thing." Continuous education, regular activities, and collaborating with others were seen as necessary if the church is to deepen understanding and create safer environments. Nana also gave a concrete example of continuity by describing how the youth had decided to have the issue within their own programs and to make space for it "even if it is only for ten minutes."

The same concern appears in Patricia, though in a more institutional form. Patricia argued that the work "should not be left only for the head office" but should also be taken up by congregational committees through local discussions, campaigns, and other activities. The emphasis here is not only that anti-GBV work should continue, but that it should be embedded more closely in ordinary congregational life. This links continuity to local ownership rather than leaving it mainly to initiatives from above.

Kwame adds another aspect by drawing attention to follow-up. After the campaign, the question for the participant was: "what comes next" Kwame argued that the church should not "just do a one-day campaign and then leave the young people to go back," but should think about how to follow up with those who took part, how to keep checking on them, and how to help the message continue. It suggests that continuity depends on what carries on after the event and not only doing more activities.

The responses show a shared concern that one-off engagement is not enough. Participants valued the activities they had joined or organized, but they also pointed to their limits if the work ended there. Their emphasis was on regularity, local ownership, and continuity beyond the initial campaign moment. In this way, anti-GBV activism was imagined less as an occasional event and more as a part of the ongoing life of the church.

7. YOUTH ANTI-GBV ACTIVISM AND PCG MISSION: ALIGNMENTS, TENSIONS, NEGOTIATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The previous chapter examined how participating youth understood their anti-GBV activism, the meanings they attached to it, and the language through which they described faith, church responsibility and mission. This chapter brings those interpretations into conversation with the PCG's missional vision and operational mission framings discussed in chapter four.

7.1 Areas of alignment between youth activism and PCG's missional vision

At the broadest level, the youth interpretations show important areas of alignment with PCG's stated missional vision. The official mission language of the church speaks of the centrality of the Word of God, the enablement of the Holy Spirit, holistic ministry, advocacy, social service and the flourishing of creation. Read alongside that wider vision, the youth accounts do not sit outside the church's mission at the level of principle. Their descriptions of anti-GBV activism often move within concerns that PCG already names in broad theological form.

This alignment becomes clearer in the way participants described anti-GBV activism through love, justice, protection, dignity, and care for persons. Several participants spoke about the church as responsible for protecting the vulnerable, creating safer spaces, speaking against injustice, and helping people seek support and dignity. These emphases resonate with the PCG mission statement, especially where it speaks of holistic ministry and socio-economic development through advocacy and effective social service.

The similarity can also be observed evident in the language of Christ-centeredness. Some participants did not connect anti-GBV work to mission through formal policy language, but through what they understood as a Christ-centered church to mean. In those responses, love, protection, equality, refusal of abuse was treated as implications of life shaped by Christ. This is important because it suggests that the youth were not just borrowing rights language and attaching it to church, but they were also reading anti-GBV activism through the church's own theological self-understanding.

7.2 Tensions and limits within dominant mission framings

The comparison becomes more difficult when attention shifts from PCG's broad missional vision to the mission areas that receive the strongest practical and institutional emphasis. At the level of principle, anti-GBV activism fits within the church's language of holistic ministry, advocacy and

care for human well-being. The tension begins when mission is read through the more dominant patterns that organize church life more directly, namely evangelism, discipleship, church planting, and church growth.

This difference between broad vision and dominant emphasis matters because the youth accounts often described anti-GBV activism through protection, dignity, care, justice, support and responsibility. These concerns sit well within a broad theology of holistic ministry. Yet the operational language that receives the strongest repetition in church structures gives greater weight to evangelism, discipleship, church planting and growth. The point, therefore, is not that youth activism falls outside the mission of the church. The point is that the mission language that most strongly shapes church practice does not foreground gender justice with the same clarity or consistency.

This tension is already visible in the interviews. Grace, for example, said that gender-based violence is "not directly mentioned "in the mission or vision" as far as the participant knew, even though it remained "embedded in the expectations" of the church's values mission, and vision. The distinction suggests that anti-GBV activism is experienced as fitting the church's calling, but not as something clearly stated in the church's dominant mission language. The connection is present, but it is more implied than directly expressed.

Michael, from another angle spoke positively about the mission statement, reading it through holistic ministry, total well-being, and human flourishing, and therefore suggesting that he saw anti-GBV work as connected to the church's mission. At the same time, when asked where this works sit in practice, Michael did not locate it directly in Mission and Evangelism, but mainly in Development and Social Services. This suggests that anti-GBV activism is institutionally present, yet largely carried in a part of church life that does not define the church's dominant mission emphasis. In that sense, gender justice appears to have a place, but not a central one.

Participants' descriptions of evangelism and discipleship likewise show this tension. Mercy said that mission is "not just about preaching" but also about "addressing real-life issues that affect people." Nana made a similar point by arguing that one cannot encounter violence and simply say, "I am only going to preach about Christ." Kwame added that anti-GBV work should "not stand alone," but should be integrated into evangelism and discipleship. These responses suggest that the participants were not rejecting the church's mission priorities as such and had experienced a

gap between dominant mission habits and the kind of mission they believe the church should practice. Rather, they were challenging whether these can continue to be imagined narrowly when the church is also confronted with violence, inequality and the need for protection. Their accounts suggest that evangelism and discipleship are perceived as insufficient when they are separated too sharply from concerns of protection, justice, and the lived realities of harm within both church and society.

A further tension appears in the question of continuity and institutional weight. Several participants implied that anti-GBV activism remains too easily confined to special events, youth spaces or departments rather than becoming part of the church's ordinary and visible life. Michael wanted the church's anti-GBV stance to become more explicit and central. Patricia felt that the work should not remain mostly at head office but should be taken up more fully by congregational committees. Nana described gender-based violence as an "everyday issue" rather than a one-time program. Their responses suggest that the issue is not only whether the church accepts anti-GBV work in principle, but also whether it gives the issue enough continuity, visibility, and institutional weight for it to shape ordinary mission practice. The more mission is structured around the four recurring priorities, the easier it becomes for anti-GBV work to remain secondary, occasional or contained in the department.

It is also worth noting that forgiveness and reconciliation did not appear strongly in either the interviews or the PCG materials examined in this study. Much more emphasis was placed on justice, protection, dignity, care, support, and the need to break silence. This does not that forgiveness and reconciliation are absent from Christian theology more broadly, or that they have no place in PCG church life beyond the material examined here. It suggests that, in this case, anti-GBV activism was being understood first through the urgent demands to name harm, protect those affected, and challenge the conditions that allow GBV to continue.

What appears here, then, is less a contradiction than an imbalance in emphasis. Anti-GBV activism can be affirmed within PCG's wider theological vision yet still remain less visible within the mission areas that receive church's strongest recurring attention. That imbalance suggests that gender justice is not outside the church's mission, but neither is it fully centered within it. This is one of the clear places where the case invites a rethinking of mission. Anti-GBV work is not absent

from church life, but its place remains uneven and insufficiently central in relation to the mission emphases that most strongly shape practice.

7.3 Negotiated practice and the limits of sustainability

The tension discussed above does not mean that anti-GBV activism and PCG mission stand apart from one another. The interviews suggest something more complex. In practice, young people are already making room for anti-GBV work within church life through youth fellowships, campaigns, local initiatives, peer education, departmental support and broad theological language drawn from love, justice, care and Christ-centeredness. What the interviews show is that anti-GBV activism already has a place within church life, even if that place remains uneven and not fully central within the church's dominant mission emphasis.

At the same time, this negotiated spaces also shows a limit. The youth creating room for anti-GBV activism in these ways suggest that the work is not yet fully sustained by the church's dominant mission emphasis. It appears through campaigns, special events, local initiative, but less clearly through the mission priorities that most strongly shape the church's ordinary self-understanding. This is important because what is not clearly emphasized as part of mission is harder to sustain in the long term. It may be practiced and valued, but it remains vulnerable to being treated as secondary, occasional and dependent on particular actors.

Grace brought this clarity by noting that anti-GBV work "is embedded in the expectations" of the church showing that the connection can be drawn from the church's wider values, even where it is not directly named. Nana's insistence that GBV is an "everyday issue," and Kwame's question, 'what comes next?" both point to the same concern that if anti-GBV work is not given continuity and regular place within church life, it risks remaining tied to moments rather than becoming part of ongoing mission practice.

The significance of this is not that the church has made no room for gender justice, nor that youth activism stands outside the church's mission. The issue is that this place is still being created mainly through practice; youth initiatives, local programs and campaigns all help to carry out the work, but that is not the same as giving it sustained emphasis within the church's mission. When anti-GBV activism depends mainly on local effort, special events or a few committed actors, its place remain fragile because it may continue, but it may also fade when that effort weakens.

The fact that anti-GBV activism is already being worked out in practice does not mean the question of mission is settled. It shows why the question remains important. Youth are already carrying this work in church life, but its place is still not secure enough within the mission emphases that shape ordinary practice. The case therefore points toward the need to rethink mission so that gender justice is not left to negotiated spaces alone but receives clearer and more sustained support.

7.4 Implications for thinking mission in African church contexts

> "I think we have to move it to a more central role. Advocacy and the campaign are not an event: they are a process. It is not something we do once and finish. It is continuous engagement and continuous advocacy. That cycle should not be broken." –Michael

This comment captures one of the clearest implications of the case. The issue is not whether anti-GBV activism has some place within church life, but whether that place is central enough, sustained enough, and visible enough to shape mission in ordinary church practice. Although this study focuses specifically on anti-GBV activism, the implications can also be read more broadly in relation to gender justice. This is because the interviews also raised wider issues of dignity, equality, exclusion, harmful norms, and the place of women and youth in church life. In this way, anti-GBV is treated here as one concrete and urgent dimension of gender justice rather than as its whole meaning.

Starting from the PCG case, this subsection considers what these findings may suggest for rethinking mission, first in relation to PCG itself and then, more cautiously, in relation to African church contexts. The case is not treated as representative of all African church settings. At the same time, the *Let Love Lead* campaign is not a purely local initiative, but part of a wider ecumenical anti-GBV effort coordinated through the All-Africa Conference of Churches across different African contexts. The issues raised by this case, especially the relation between mission, gender justice, youth agency and institutional emphasis, are therefore not only local to PCG. The case offers a bounded but useful site from which to reflect on wider ecclesial questions that may arise elsewhere.

One implication of the case is that gender justice may need a more central place within mission that it often receives in practice, because what is not clearly emphasized as mission is harder to sustain. The findings showed that anti-GBV activism could be affirmed within broad Christian language of love, justice, dignity, care, and holistic well-being. Yet they also showed that this fit

becomes less clear when attention turns to the mission emphases that receive the strongest recurring weight in church practice. This suggests that, in the PCG case, gender justice cannot be left mainly to campaigns or youth interest if it is to become part of the church's ongoing mission. More broadly, the case suggests that African church contexts may need to ask not only what mission allows in principle, but what mission actually sustains in practice.

The scale and persistence of GBV make this even more important. A problem of this magnitude is difficult to address if the church responds to it mainly through occasional campaigns or youth initiatives. The case suggests that anti-GBV work needs a more regular and institutional place within church life if it to be sustained. This means giving it clearer visibility, continuity, and responsibility within the ordinary structures through which the church teaches, disciples, supports and guides it members.

Secondly, the case shows that the young people interpreted, embodied, and in some respects stretched the mission of the church in practice. They organized activities, challenged harmful norms, created space for discussion, and linked anti-GBV work to Christian responsibility, justice and care. At the same time, the study also shows the limits of youth effort. Youth can open space and carry the issue forward, but they cannot bear the full weight of sustaining anti-GBV work if the wider church does not take it up more centrally. The implication is therefore not that youth can solve the problem on their own, but that mission needs to take youth agency more seriously as a source of insight, initiative and challenge, while also refusing to leave responsibility there.

Third, the case points beyond anti-GBV efforts in the narrow sense toward broader questions of gender justice. This appears especially where participants connected violence to harmful cultural norms, exclusion, and unequal participation. In this respect, the study suggests that anti-GBV activism is not only about responding to individual acts of harm. It also opens wider questions about the kinds of gendered inequalities that can be tolerated, normalized, or left unaddressed in church and society. Rethinking mission in relation to anti-GBV may therefore also require asking how mission speaks to dignity, equality, and the full participation of women and girls, rather than stopping only at violence after it has occurred.

Fourth, the study highlights the form that mission takes within ordinary church life. Participants described the church as a place that should offer refuge, guidance, and support, yet they also pointed to fear, uneven trust, and weak visibility. This suggests that rethinking mission requires

more than affirming principles of justice in theory. It also has to take form in developing church practices that make protection, confidentiality and support credible in everyday life. The case then, points to a close relationship between mission and church life. Where gender justice is affirmed in principle but not carried in trustworthy structures and habits, the church's witness remains weakened.

The implications suggest that rethinking mission in African church contexts does not necessarily require abandoning existing mission language. It may instead require asking what receives central emphasis within that language and what remains secondary in practice. The PCG case shows that anti-GBV activism can already be present within church life and can be carried with strong commitment by young people. It also shows that this presence remains uneven when it is not more clearly sustained within the church's mission priorities. The implication, therefore, is that mission needs to be widened and more clearly weighted in practice so that gender justice and youth agency are not left at the edges of church life.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Answering main research question

This thesis examined how participating PCG youth interpreted their anti-GBV activism within the *Let Love Lead* campaign in Greater Accra during 2025, and what emerged when these interpretations were read alongside the missional vision and mission framings of the church, and what this case suggests for rethinking mission in relation to gender justice and youth agency.

The findings show that the participating youth who were interviewed interpreted their anti-GBV activism as a meaningful part of Christian and church life. They described it as work that involved speaking up, protecting others, resisting silence, challenging harmful norms, and helping people find support. In their accounts, they also interpreted it through Christian language such as love, justice, dignity, equality, Christ-centeredness, and care for the vulnerable. For that reason, the activism was understood as part of what faithful church life requires, even if participants did not all express that in the same way.

When these youth interpretations were compared with PCG's mission language, the relationship proved neither absent nor fully settled. The youth's emphasis on care, justice, protection, and holistic well-being fits well with the church's broader missional language of holistic ministry,

social service and holistic well-being. At the same time, a tension became visible when the comparison moved from this broad missional vision to the mission emphases that receive the strongest practical and institutional attention, especially evangelism, discipleship, church growth, and church planting. Anti-GBV activism was therefore not outside the church's mission, but neither was it fully central within the mission priorities that most strongly shape ordinary practice.

The study therefore concludes that youth anti-GBV activism in this case occupied an uneven place within the mission life of the church. It was present, meaningful, and often justified in Christian terms, but it remained more clearly supported at the level of broad theological vision than at the level of dominant mission emphasis. This is why the case points toward a need to rethink mission. The issue is not that gender justice has no place in church life, but that its place remains too indirect and too weakly sustained when it is not given clearer emphasis within the mission priorities that guide practice. The case also highlights the importance of youth agency within mission. Rather than functioning only as recipients or implementers of church programs, the participating youth actively interpreted, embodied, and carried mission through their engagement with anti-GBV activism. Their experiences therefore point to the need to take young people seriously as contributors to how mission is understood and practiced within contemporary church contexts.

8.2 Contributions of this study

This study supports Bosch's argument that mission cannot be reduced to one dominant form. The PCG case confirms the importance of a broader missional understanding that can hold together proclamation, justice, care, and the well-being of persons. At the same time, it adds an important nuance: broad missional language does not by itself ensure equal practical emphasis. The case suggests that the question is not only what mission includes in principle, but what, in the materials examined here, it more clearly sustains with continuity and institutional weight.

The study also contributes to practical-theological discussion. Read through Ganzervoort and Roeland's account of praxis as a field of action, experience, and meaning, youth anti-GBV activism becomes a site in which faith is interpreted through concrete responses to violence, silence, support, and care. The case therefore supports the value of practical theology in taking practices and narratives seriously as a theological domain.

At the same time, the findings strengthen Aziz's insistence that young people should not be treated only as recipients of ministry. The participating youth through the activism interpreted Christian

responsibility, named harmful norms, and helped reveal where mission is already being extended in practice. This also resonates with Noval's argument that young people should not be valued mainly as the future of the church, but as a part of its present life whose presence and gifts can shape the Christian community now.[79] The study suggests, then, that youth anti-GBV activism can be one of the places where mission is not only practiced, but also rethought, especially in relation to gender justice.

8.3 Recommendations for further research

While this study has examined a bounded case of youth anti-GBV activism within the PCG in Greater Accra, it also points to several directions for further research. First, a wider qualitative study could include more participants across different PCG congregations or presbyteries in order to examine whether the relationship observed here between youth anti-GBV activism, mission language, and church practice is more widely shared within the denomination.

Second, further research could broaden the range of mission materials examined. The study focused on official and accessible denominational documents, but future work could also include sermons, workshop materials, congregational teaching, and other local forms through which mission is communicated and practiced. Such research would help show whether anti-GBV concerns and wider gender justice questions are more visible in everyday church discourse than in formal mission statements alone.

Third, a comparative research involving other *Let Love Lead* contexts in Africa could help place the PCG case in wider perspective to make it possible to see whether the issues raised in this study are mainly local to this case or whether they reflect wider patterns in how churches negotiate mission, gender justice, and youth agency.

Finally, this study has treated anti-GBV work as one important dimension of gender justice, but further work could explore more fully how churches relate mission to questions of equality, participation, leadership, and the everyday gendered norms that shape ecclesial life.

[79] Christian Noval, "Theological Anthropology of Youth as the Paradigm for Youth Ministry," *Journal of Disability& Religion* 22, no.4 (2018): 417,422. https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2018.1521767

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your involvement in the Let Love Lead activities in your congregation?
2. Can you describe one or two anti-GBV activities that stand out most clearly in your memory?
3. How were these activities organized, and what role did young people play in them?
4. When you look back, what do you think these activities were trying to achieve?
5. What did participating in these activities mean to you personally?
6. Did your involvement change how you think about gender-based violence, the church, or the responsibility of young people? How?
7. In what ways, if any, did your Christian faith shape your involvement in this work?
8. Do you see this kind of anti-GBV work as part of what the church is called to do? Why or why not?
9. When you think about the mission of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, what comes to mind, and how does this work fit or not fit within that?
10. What role do you think young people have in addressing issues like GBV in the church and society?
11. Were there any challenges, tensions, or limitations in doing this work within the church?
12. Looking back, what place do you think anti-GBV work should have in the future mission of PCG?

APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet

Study title: *Let Love Lead* and Mission: A qualitative case study of PCG Youth missional interpretations of anti-GBV activism in Greater Accra (2025) in comparison with denominational mission framings.

Researcher: Kevin Maina Wanjau
Institution: Master of Theology, Protestant Theological University
Email: k.maina@student.pthu.nl

Invitation

You are invited to take part in a research interview for my master's thesis. Before you decide whether to participate, please read the information below carefully. Feel free to ask any questions before making your decision. You have been invited because you are a young person involved in the Let Love Lead campaign activities in Greater Accra in 2025, and your experience is relevant to this study.

Purpose of the study

This research explores how Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) youth who participated in the *Let Love Lead: End GBV Now* campaign in Greater Accra during 2025 understand and describe their anti-gender-based violence activism in comparison to the church's missional vision. The study is interested in how youth participants interpret their activities, motivations, faith language, and understanding of mission in connection with anti-GBV activism.

Participation

Participation is completely voluntary. You are free to decide whether or not to take part. You may also choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable.

Choosing not to participate will have no negative consequences for you, your church, or your relationship with any organization connected to the campaign.

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to take part in one interview lasting approximately 45–60 minutes. The interview will be conducted in English and will take place online via Microsoft Teams.

The interview will ask about:

- your involvement in Let Love Lead activities
- how you understood the purpose of those activities
- how you relate anti-GBV action to Christian faith and mission
- how you see the role of youth in the church's witness and response to GBV

The interview is not intended to ask you to disclose personal experiences of GBV. You only need to speak about what you are comfortable sharing.

Recording

With your permission, the interview will be audio and video recorded for transcription and analysis. You may also ask for the recording to be paused or stopped at any point during the interview.

Benefits

There is no direct personal benefit or payment for participation. However, your contribution may help deepen understanding of youth participation, church mission, and anti-GBV engagement in African church contexts.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Your interview will be treated confidentially. In the thesis and any related academic writing, your real name will not be used. A pseudonym or participant code will be used instead.

How will my data be used?

The interview recording will be transcribed and used for academic analysis in my master's thesis. Short quotations from the interview may be used in the thesis and possible academic presentations or publications, but these will be anonymized as far as possible.

Data storage and protection

Audio and video files, transcripts, and consent forms will be stored securely and accessed only by the researcher and, where necessary, the supervisor.

- Audio recordings will be stored securely until transcription is completed.
- Transcripts will be pseudonymized.
- Consent forms will be stored separately from interview data.
- Data will be kept in line with university requirements.

Withdrawal

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason.

If you choose to withdraw:

- before the interview, no data will be collected
- during the interview, the interview will stop

After the interview has been transcribed, anonymized and incorporated into the analysis, it may no longer be possible to remove your data fully from the study.

Results

The results will be presented in my master's thesis submitted to the PThU. They may also be used in academic presentations or future publications arising from the thesis.

Thank you for considering participating in this study.

APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form
Study title: *Let Love Lead* and Mission: A qualitative case study of PCG Youth missional interpretations of anti-GBV activism in Greater Accra (2025) in comparison with denominational mission framings.

Researcher: Kevin Maina Wanjau

Please tick each box to confirm:

[ ] I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for this study.

[ ] I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers.

[ ] I understand that my participation is voluntary.

[ ] I understand that I am free to refuse to answer any question.

[ ] I understand that I may stop the interview at any time without giving a reason.

[ ] I understand that after my interview has been anonymized and incorporated into the analysis, it may no longer be possible to remove my data fully.

[ ] I understand that the interview will concern my views and experiences relating to anti-GBV activism, faith, and mission, and that I do not have to disclose any personal experience that I do not wish to share.

[ ] I understand that the interview shall be audio and video recorded.

[ ] I give permission for the interview to be audio and video recorded.

[ ] I understand that anonymised quotations from the interview may be used in the thesis and related academic outputs.

[ ] I understand how my data will be stored and used.

[ ] I agree to take part in this study.

Participant name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 4:DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Data Management Plan (DMP) for Master students

Please complete all fields, or explicitly indicate: not applicable or n/a. Explanations on this form are in dark blue boxes. You may delete these boxes after completing the form.	**1.**

General