

THE LIGHTHOUSE CHAPEL INTERNATIONAL, ITS GROWTH FROM 1988 TO 2013

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ABSTRACT

The Lighthouse Chapel International, a charismatic denomination that started almost three decades ago in a coastal suburb of Accra, Korle Gonno has witnessed glowing achievements. It has grown from its humble beginnings by the grace of God from a five member congregation to a world-beater. It is domiciled in seventy-two countries, all continents of the world, trained over three thousand pastors and built over five hundred and fifty church buildings. This article seeks to bring to the fore, what has accounted for the church's massive growth, its strategies, growth and missions, important milestones among other things.

INTRODUCTION

Having reviewed articles like *“All Nations” and Church Planting, What’s the Deal with the Church Growth Movement?* by Ed Stetzer and *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement* by Engle and McIntosh, as well as Gailyn Van Rhee’s, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies* on church growth, the researcher realized that, the articles reviewed did not look at the church growth of Lighthouse Chapel International and that is what the paper seeks to address. This work therefore sets out to do a thorough study of the LCI with particular reference to its strategic church planting programme. The research was carried out between the periods 2011 and 2013 hence choosing the growth of the church between 1988 and 2013 was most appropriate and suitable for the researcher.

Growth and Missions

Between 1988 and the end of 1991 the LCI was a single church. The church expansion work started gradually in 1992. In the initial phase of this development, branch churches were started primarily by the founder himself in places where he felt the leadings of the Spirit of God to do so, as was the case with the first branches established in London and Zurich in 1993 and 1994, respectively. Other branches were started in response to requests from some earlier members of the church who had travelled abroad, as was the case in 1992 for establishing a branch in Geneva². The founder interprets this literally, to mean that all efforts must be mobilised to plant churches worldwide since “there is no way you can teach people unless you regularly gather them”, and that “a regular gathering of Christians for the purpose of teaching is called a church”; in addition, “the more gatherings there are, the more the Great Commission is being fulfilled”³. Besides, Heward-Mills believes that because of the vastness of the world and the distribution of people, the Great Commission will be facilitated by forming churches in different locations instead of having a few “megachurches” in a few locations. He is convinced that the church must emulate the example of the Antioch church (Acts 11; 13:1-4) that initiated missions into many virgin territories.

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² Dag Heward-Mills (Founder and Presiding Bishop), in discussion with the author.

³ Dag Heward-Mills, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*. (Dansoman, Accra: Parchment House, 2005), 1-6

These assertions are significant because Christ came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), and church planting is an inalienable catalyst for this to be perpetuated, as was clearly demonstrated by the missionary efforts of the early apostles and also the Christianization of much of Ghana and other African countries by the white missionary societies of the mid-fifteenth to late nineteenth centuries. It is therefore of utmost importance for the charismatic churches to overcome all the real and perceived factors, including the pursuance of materialism and consumerism, that have been assigned (correctly in my opinion) as reasons by some Ghanaian theologians, including Alfred Koduah, for the limitation of their significant expansion⁴.

Between 1993 and 2000 the church planting effort gained massive impetus and momentum, resulting in the proliferation of the LCI missions in all regional capitals of Ghana. Starting from 1993 the Executive Board, then the governing authority of the church, decided to start branch churches in the city of Accra, later extending this vision to all the regional capitals and densely populated towns of Ghana. The hallmark of this church planting drive was the use of mostly trained laity to plant and pastor the church's branches. Within this same period there were attempts to start missionary work in some African countries, including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Central African Republic and The Gambia, with very limited success. The lack of success was due largely to the absence of a well-developed mission understanding and strategy at the time, which resulted in the use of poorly trained and equipped missionaries, and also frequent political instability in some of those countries (unpublished archival records, LCI Missions Office). Mission then was understood to mean merely sending people to start churches with little regard to such critical foundational issues as who should be sent, which groups were to be targeted, and what administrative and theological support systems are needed for effective mission work.

A major thrust towards international missions began in 1997 when the Executive Board under the inspiration of the founder felt that the LCI had to redouble its efforts to fulfil Jesus' Great Commission. The Missions Office was therefore formed and Pastor Jacob Godwyll was appointed as the first missions director. According to a communication by Jacob Godwyll, "We started seriously laying the foundations for missions work, including formulating strategies, recruiting and training future missionaries through the Informal Pastoral Training Programme (IPTP) and praying fervently".

The theological training for missions now focused on personal faith to fulfil the missionary calling, knowledge of God through regular Bible study and prayer, practical guidelines for starting a church, Christian sacrifice, the necessity to remain loyal to the calling of God and the LCI leadership, building effective missional relationships with the local people of the mission field, and church administration and management. Theologically, it was important for these future workers in the vineyard of God to be knowledgeable in the scriptures (2 Tim 2:15), to be ready to sacrifice in order to be fruitful (John 12:24), and to remain faithful to the end (1 Cor 4:2; Rev 2:10). Judging from the fact that the second major attempt at international mission succeeded, it is logical to suggest that the changes that were introduced to reinforce the training of the church planters were useful, giving credence to the observation by *The Cape Town Commitment* that "the mission of theological education is to strengthen and accompany the mission of the church"⁵.

The first international missionary, Chris Andoh, was sent to Kampala, Uganda in June 1999; this venture was facilitated by a Ghanaian Catholic banker living in Kampala who was familiar with the work of LCI and requested for a branch of the church to be started in Kampala, offering readily to host the missionary that would be sent. Subsequently, other missionaries were sent to other African nations including Swaziland, Kenya, Nigeria, Cameroon, Mozambique, Senegal and The Gambia. Most of these initial missions were successful, paving the way for expansion in subsequent years. Concurrently, the

⁴ Alfred Koduah, *Christianity in Ghana Today*. (Accra: Church of Pentecost, 2004), 131

⁵ The Cape Town Commitment-The Lausanne Movement, (2010); 47. A Journal on world Evangelization.

expansion work in Ghana proceeded with much accomplishment⁶, because of a better understanding of missions following the correction of some of the earlier foundational mistakes, and the availability of a large army of lay people for church planting all across the country.

All missionaries at that time were fully sponsored by the Missions Office and received full financial support for as long as they needed to cater for remuneration and church development and maintenance expenditures. Initially this was done irrespective of whether the mission was thriving or otherwise. A drastic paradigm shift to this policy occurred at a camp meeting dubbed “The Maturity Camp” with all missionaries in May 2009. It had been observed that some missionaries had not performed creditably over the years and had just become a financial drain to the missionary financial support system. This necessitated the introduction of a new system of support which was linked to the performance of the missionary and the mission. Consequently, during this camp meeting, the Mature Non-Dependent Support system was adopted⁷.

Under this system, initial financing was to cater for such expenditure as transport to the mission field, accommodation and basic equipment, after which further financial support towards the acquisition or construction of permanent church halls and other development for the mission would be made based on what the missionary/mission had accomplished. The theological basis for this new support system is premised on the biblical demand for servants to whom talents have been given to be profitable, or to succeed (Matt 25:14-30). Jesus instructed Christians to go and produce much abiding fruit (John 15:16), adding that “he that hath, to him shall be given and he shall have more” (Matt 25:29; Luke 19:26). Therefore, currently the LCI’s policy is to make available more support to flourishing missions. This strategy has led to more successful missions, since the missionaries have a heightened focus on their work.

However, many factors determine the success of a mission, including the level of openness to the gospel message, and poverty in a given missionary field. In such locations, for example, Northern Ghana, and indeed much of Sub-Saharan Africa, the mission may not flourish quickly; it may fail, even though the missionary may be very determined or focused. Therefore, it is counterproductive to limit support to non-flourishing missions; rather they could be treated as “special missions” and given sustained support.

During a camp meeting from 22-25 August 2000 held at the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana, the LCI’s founder unveiled a new vision for church planting designated “1000 Micro Churches”⁸. The vision was to establish within the next decade 1000 churches with a minimum membership of thirty congregants. To actualize this vision, many innovative ideas were implemented, including the setting up of the Denominational Office to administrate the LCI churches as one network. The branches were grouped into dioceses and some senior pastors were appointed as their overseers⁹.

The motivation for this new vision was the need for the establishment of more churches; this would lead to more soul winning in many more locations. Having been firmly established in Jerusalem (Accra and its environs) and Judaea (large cities of Ghana) the time had come for the LCI to expand even furthermore to Samaria (rural Ghana and Africa) and to the rest of the world with the gospel (Acts 1:8). However, unsupervised expansion had the potential danger of creating chaos as a result of a misunderstanding of the church’s expansion principles or non-compliance with them. When the early church initiated missions it constituted the Jerusalem council with key apostles, for example, Peter and James, to provide the necessary overall guidance (Acts 9:14-15, 15:1-30). Thus, the creation of dioceses and the Denominational Office for effective oversight of the sprouting missions was guided by such biblical examples.

⁶ Unpublished archival records, LCI Missions Office

⁷ Bishop Dag Heward-Mills, “Maturity Camp” (Unpublished Camp notes, August 2000).

⁸ Bishop Dag Heward-Mills, “1000 Micro Churches” (Unpublished Camp notes, August 2000).

⁹ Unpublished archival records, LCI Denominational Office.

From the time the founder established the first church branches in Europe in the early 1990s, more branches were planted both in the UK and other European countries, including The Netherlands, Austria, Italy and Germany, using lay missionaries. From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, Heward-Mills held several camp meetings in the UK to train members for full-time missionary work. During those camps Heward-Mills expounded his mission of theology to the participants. Examples of these camps were *Others* (2004), *All Out* (2002), *Double Mega Missionary Church* (1999), *Pastors of Thousands* (2001) and *Missions and Missionaries* (2004). Prominent doctrines, including Christian sacrifice (Matt 16:24; John 12:24), obedience to the call of God (Jonah 1-3; John 21:15-17), emulation of Jesus' example to abandon personal worldly ambition and aspirations for the sake of evangelizing other peoples and nations (John 3:16; Phil 2:5-8) were taught with much fervour and conviction, triggering many attendees to respond to serve in international missions.

This spiritual investment has borne enormous fruits; many of those who attended these camps responded to the call of God and became missionaries in diverse places, including the Caribbean islands, South America, Australia and Africa. A similar strategy was adopted to train church planters to start expansion work on the North American continent¹⁰.

In 2005 another monumental decision for church expansion through church planting, this time in rural Ghana, was taken by the Executive Board. In a communication, Heward-Mills related the origins of these decisions, saying, “whilst waiting on the Lord in Elmina (a coastal town in the Central Region of Ghana where the famous St. George slave trade castle is located), the Lord asked me to start churches in the districts, smaller towns and villages of Ghana”¹¹. This church planting project was named “Ghana Missions”. Prospective missionaries were initially recruited mostly from the tertiary institutions and trained for this work; from 2008 graduates from the Anagkazo Bible Seminary were also sent into this venture. Preaching at the “Annual Homecoming Convention” (an annual gathering of LCI congregants from around the world in the first week of November 2010) the LCI founder promulgated yet another Church expansion vision – “10,000 Churches”¹², a target which is aggressively being pursued around the world. At this conference, the founder reiterated the need for the proliferation of more LCI churches towards the achievement of the overall mission goal of 25,000, the 10,000 target being the immediate goal. The theological emphasis had not changed, except that he cautioned against complacency, stressing the need to add urgency to the task since more people needed to be reached with the gospel. Also the prevalence of mitigating factors like wars, political tensions and instability around the globe necessitated the need to preach the gospel “while it is day, for the night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4).

Three important factors that helped propel the LCI's church planting efforts within this period were 1) the employment of full-time administrative staff, 2) initiation of church building projects or their acquisition, and 3) the strengthening of the full-time Bible Seminary. The full-time Bible Seminary had been established in 1997 to complement the informal processes of training church leaders and workers. According to a communication by Rev. Yoku Amonoo-Neizer, the first Principal of the Lighthouse Bible School, with regards to its origins and aims, “The Bible School was started as a result of the Presiding Bishop's desire to institute a more formalized training in the ministry with examined modules. The aim of the school was to equip students for the ministry”¹³.

¹⁰ Richard Aryee, (Senior Bishop, Lighthouse Chapel International, UK), in discussion with the author, 2012.

¹¹ Dag Heward-Mills, (Presiding Bishop and founder of Lighthouse chapel International), in discussion with the author, 2012.

¹² Audio Camp Message, “Ten Thousand Churches”, 2010

¹³ Yooku Amonoo-Neizer, (First Principal, Lighthouse Bible School), in discussion with the author, 2012

The establishment of the Bible School was a clear indication of a change in Heward-Mills' earlier downplaying of the need for formal theological training, and a pointer to his deepening understanding of missions.

Between 1997 and 2004 the contributions of graduates from the Bible School were relatively insignificant for various reasons, including a high dropout rate, poorly selected students and the relatively short duration of training. These problems were addressed by the church by introducing a more rigorous four year full-time residential programme that started February 2005. Additionally, better qualified academic and administrative staff were recruited, and a full scholarship funding scheme provided. These changes yielded fruit and since 2008 graduates from the Bible School have planted many churches in Ghana. The school over the years has attracted members from the LCI international missions who also contribute to the church planting efforts in their home countries when they graduate from the school¹⁴.

Also since 2008 several churches have requested the LCI to mentor them into church planting by sending their prospective church planters to be trained. Such products have also undertaken church expansion work for their respective mother churches after graduation. Such prominent charismatic churches as Charismatic Evangelistic Ministries and Action Chapel International have been some of the beneficiaries of the church's training programme.

Several theological factors that were introduced to reinforce the Bible School training ensured the latter successes of its products. Since a bishop could not be a novice (1 Tim 3:6), a more rigorous assessment was carried out to ensure that prospective students had experienced personal conversion. Besides, the training now emphasized the inculcation of strong moral and general discipline (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7) and the systematic assessment of the church planter's calling. It was this theological consideration that led to the introduction of a more comprehensive system of assessment during the entire training period, known as the Apostolic Assessment of Callings and Convictions, assessing academic work, moral and general discipline, ministerial call and readiness to fulfil it. Furthermore, emulating Jesus' mentoring style of being "with the disciples" before sending (Mark 3:13-15), the school placed great emphasis on the attachment of its students to experienced church planters, called Disciple Making Ministers, for both theoretical and field experience in church planting. All of these significant additions and restructuring have ensured the procreation of much better equipped church planters from the Bible School. However, despite all these improvements, it has been observed that, given the same support and prevailing conditions some of the church planters from the school still fail on the field. The reasons for this are nebulous.

As the church continued to flourish it encountered several challenges. For example, a socio-political upheaval in the late 1990s was a major challenge that had the potential to break the will of the leadership of the denomination as well as to endanger its very existence. The upheavals resulted from disagreements with the Korle Gonno community (where the church was located) with regard to issues such as where to position an electricity transformer, use of legally acquired community land to construct a car park and the provision of community public toilets at no cost to the community as part of the church's social responsibility. These seemingly minor disagreements escalated in May 1998 when some residents of the community attacked the church and its offices using explosives. Bandoh documents that "it was discovered the next day that Dag Heward-Mills' office had been bombed and burnt during the night"¹⁵.

The harassment and persecution of the church continued to escalate and culminated in major physical violence where church members were attacked during an ordination service on May 31,

¹⁴ Eddy Addy, (First Vice-Chancellor, Lighthouse Bible School), in discussion with the author, 2012.

¹⁵ Eric Bandoh. "Transforming Lives Through Christian Mission: A case study of Lighthouse Chapel International Social Ministry". (M.Th. Dissertation, Trinity Theological Seminary, (Legon, Accra., 2012), 61

1998. These events were described by Louisa Mills-Odoi (2008:95)¹⁶ in her thesis: “The church was attacked during the ordination service by a mob led by the Sakumono Traditional people...”

Even though there is an annual month-long ban in May on drumming and noise-making in Ghana’s capital, Accra, as a prelude to the celebration of the annual Homowo festival, the major festival of the Ga people¹⁷, the church claimed that it did not violate any ban and perceived the attacks as persecutions that had emanated from the animosities that had been created as a result of misunderstanding of its social responsibility to the community. Unwarranted ecclesiastical persecutions should be seen in the light of the biblical teaching that suffering constitutes part of the call for evangelization (Phil 1: 29). The exponents of the *Cape Town Commitment*¹⁸ echo these sentiments. They justly encourage that “suffering may be necessary in our missionary engagement as witnesses to Christ”, adding that “being willing to suffer is an acid test for the genuineness of our mission”. Thus, it is not far-fetched to conclude that the unpleasant occurrences the LCI experienced were a necessary part of its missional journey.

These unfortunate events precipitated the decision of the leadership of the LCI to relocate its international headquarters one more time. Since January 2006 the church has been operating from its new ultra-modern church complex named The Qodesh in Accra.

Statement of Faith, Vision and Mission of the Lighthouse Chapel International

The LCI’s statements of faith, vision and mission have evolved during its relatively short time of existence. From the onset it was meant to be a single congregation; there was no intention for expansion, as was reflected in its initial name, Korle-Bu Christian Center. With time, however, a more national and indeed worldwide ministry was envisaged. This necessitated a corporate vision and mission as well as a statement of faith to crystallize the essential beliefs of the church. E.A.T. Sackey has reminisced on the philosophies that led to the genesis of the church’s beliefs and what it wanted to achieve: “We had the desire to believe in Christ our saviour, and were convinced that only faith in Him and the blood He shed on the cross could save mankind”¹⁹.

According to the LCI’s constitution, first formulated in the 1990s, and with its very latest modification done during a recent General Council Conference (a meeting of all Bishops and General Superintendents) in October 2012, the LCI’s statement of faith, vision and mission is as follows: “God Almighty is the one and only true God; He is three-in-one, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and creator of all nature”.

The vision of the LCI is to provide a solid foundation in Christian faith and Bible based instruction to equip its membership to not only live for Christ as Christians but also to preach and teach the gospel while abiding by the laws of the country where the Church is located.

The mission of Lighthouse Chapel International includes the following (LCI Church Constitution, 2012):

- a. To establish 25,000 churches worldwide
- b. To train Christians to work for God, especially in the areas of church planting and missions
- c. To plant churches in 150 countries

¹⁶ Louis Mills-Odoi, “The Concept of Miracles”. (M.Th. Dissertation, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon: Accra, 2008), 95.

¹⁷ Emmanuel Ansah, *My Journey with the Charismatics*. (Spintex, Accra: Smartline Publishers, 2012), 39.

¹⁸ The Cape Town Commitment- The Lausanne Movement, (2012); 32-33. A Journal on world Evangelization. 2012, 32-33

¹⁹ E.A.T.Sackey Eddy Addy, (Senior Associate to Bishop Dag Heward-Mills), in discussion with the author, 2012.

- d. To make available all resources for the advancement of the gospel and the fulfilment of the Great Commission
- e. To go to heaven and to hear Jesus say, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21)

Heward-Mills²⁰ is of the clear conviction that the mindset of church planters should be that “wisdom is to be mindful of heaven and conscious of approaching eternity”; he emphasizes that the expectation of eternal commendations by Jesus for soul-winning on earth must serve as a great incentive for church planters. This theological context is the foundation for the LCI’s founder’s tireless teachings on working for God especially by planting churches, a doctrine that is the foremost component of the church’s model for missionary work.

Early Church Governance

From its inception till the end of 2005 the highest decision-making body was the Executive Board, membership of which constituted the founder, his two key assistants and his wife, the head of the Women’s Ministry. The Executive Board had primary responsibility for the day-to-day running of the church organization. Some members of the laity provided some administrative support in the areas of finances and general administration. Between 1995 and 2001 a few more qualified full-time administrative staff were recruited to manage the Missions, Denomination and Finance Offices. An important addition to the governance structure, aimed at assisting the Executive Board at this stage, was the formation of the Pastoral Board, made up of all pastors and missionaries and the Annual Synod. The Pastoral Board had oversight over the affairs of the individual churches, while the Annual Synod was an annual pastors’ conference for self-assessment and decision-making for the then burgeoning denomination. The Annual Synod laid the foundations of the Shuffling Conference which continues to date²¹.

Current Church Governance

These governance structures persisted until they were completely overhauled at a historic Church Government and Succession Conference held in September 2005 at the Volta Hotel in Akosombo. The following four monumental decisions that were to change the fortunes of the LCI denomination were made at the end of this conference:

- Establishment of the Worldwide Shuffling Conference (to replace the Annual Synod) to execute among others the assessment of pastors and governance of the denomination
- The establishment of the Stallion Council, composed of selected seasoned administrators to support the work of the Shuffling Conference
- The adoption of key church governance and church planting principles as taught by John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church (creation of more dioceses, travelling to do more church planting and also for oversight)
- The original Executive Board was to adopt a more consultative role (Proceedings of the Government and Succession Conference, 2005 - unpublished archival records, LCI Denominational Office).

With the increasing growth of the denomination as an international network of churches, since 2006 more overseers have been appointed, including the consecration of several bishops to foster effective development and supervision. In addition, apostles and prophets were also consecrated to help embark on

²⁰ Dag Heward-Mills, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*. (Dansoman, Accra: Parchment House, 2005), 12 & 13

²¹ Unpublished archival records, LCI Denominational Office

more church planting and strengthen pastoral care respectively. Thus, having departed from its Executive Board style of governance since its inception, the LCI operates an episcopal system of church governance, which was adopted from the governance style of the Methodist Church in Ghana. This researcher believes that such governance ensures that apostolic leadership not only sends (Acts 13:1-4) but also strengthens the developing missions (Acts 14:22, 15:36) and, when required, directly mediates theological and missiological misunderstandings that may come up as the expansion work progresses (Acts 15:1-30). The LCI denomination has been structured to ensure the highest and most effective spiritual and administrative oversight, which also engenders efficient church planting.

The Bishops' Council

This is the highest decision-making body of the denomination. Its membership is constituted of all consecrated bishops, apostles and prophets in the LCI. The chairman of this council, who also serves as the Presiding Bishop, the overall denominational leader, is chosen through a voting system by members of the Council, and runs this office for a total of five years. The primary responsibility of the Bishops' Council is to provide oversight of the worldwide denomination's vision and mission. Each member of the Bishops' Council has the responsibility to oversee a specific sector of the denomination, such as missions, training of pastors and leaders, financing and general administration. In a cascading manner, decisions of the Bishops' Council are carried out by the following:

- a. **The General Council.** This council is made up of all general superintendents of the LCI. These are senior ministers with established centres of governance that oversee councils of the denomination, the former referring to a group of churches that have been delineated for administrative reasons. Their essential role is to implement the decisions of the Bishops' Council in their region of jurisdiction.
- b. **The Mission Overseers.** These are more experienced and accomplished church planters, who are given the added responsibility to administrate a number of churches, which are collectively described as a diocese.
- c. **Permanent Mission Church.** The individual churches in the LCI denomination which are led by full-time church planters are referred to as Permanent Mission Churches (PMCs). They are managed in accordance with denominational doctrines and principles. The policy of the denomination is to maintain to a large extent church planters at their post on a long term basis in order to foster effective development of the church.

The Stallion Council

This council is the umbrella organization for all the different administrative departments of the LCI, each of which is headed by well-trained administrators, most of whom are also ministers of the gospel. The departments that constitute this council are outlined below:

- a. **The Denominational Office (DO)** monitors the administration of LCI churches and missions.
- b. **The Income/Expense Management Office (IEMO)** ensures that financial procedures are appropriately followed to guarantee that the financial integrity of the missionary and the mission is not compromised.
- c. **The Account Monitoring Office (AMO)** ensures that annual financial statements as required by the laws of a particular country are prepared by all LCI missions.
- d. **The Paraphernalia Office (PO)** monitors compliance with the LCI regulations with respect to furnishings and equipment. The aim is to ensure denominational uniformity.
- e. **The Development and Legal Office (DLO)** is responsible for the acquisition or development of all LCI assets, ensuring that all necessary laws are adhered to, not only to prevent litigation against the church but also secure the integrity of the denomination.
- f. **Unity and Spiritual Development Office (USDO).** Through regular assessment, this office ensures that the healthy spiritual development of LCI church planters and their missions and congregations is

maintained. It guarantees the observance and maintenance of denominational statements of faith, doctrines and principles.

g. **Care and Crisis Office (CCO)**. This very important office handles issues that deal with the welfare of all LCI church planters and adjunct workers. It ensures that necessary provisions for well-being and comfort are provided. It renders immediate help to all staff in times of tragedy, bereavement and other personal, family or church crisis.

h. **The Loyalty Office (LO)** ensures that the doctrine of loyalty is taught and practised by all levels of leadership of the LCI denomination.

i. **The Proton World Missionary Society (PWMS)** is the umbrella department that is responsible for the initial recruitment, placement and support for church planting work worldwide. Effective coordination among the administrators of the different offices has resulted in an efficient management and monitoring of the complex nature of the worldwide LCI denomination.

Important Statistics and Milestones

Although the records of important happenings and decisions in the LCI are available, they have not been collected and stored in a systematic and retrievable system, but rather kept in secure archival storage. Some of the various departments mentioned above have a store of unpublished material that contains some useful information regarding statistical records of membership and church branches. The figures and records that follow have been obtained from these sources and provide reasonably accurate information about the LCI.

Between 1990 and 2005 the church had 794 branches with 619 pastors world-wide. By June 2008, the number of branches had increased to 815 in 52 countries spread across five continents (*LifeWay* magazine, June 2008). This number increased within one year to 1,014 branches with 726 pastors and 523 lay ministers, so that by November 2009 the total number of branches had reached 1,155 whilst the total membership of LCI was over 20,000. The records indicate that 708 of these branches are in Ghana alone with the rest in Africa, Europe, North and South America as well as in Australia²².

Other key statistics and milestones obtained from the Denominational Office of this relatively young charismatic denomination are listed below as at December 2012.

Total number of churches worldwide	1278
Total number of churches in Ghana	903
Total number of churches in Africa (excluding Ghana)	150
Total number of churches in Europe	140
Total number of churches in North America and Canada	62
Total number of churches in South America	6
Total number of churches in the Caribbean	7
Total number of churches in Australasia	7
Total number of churches in Asia	3
Missionaries in Ghana	744
Missionaries worldwide	1254
Countries with LCI branches	61
Building projects	261
Lay missionaries	910

²² Unpublished archival records, LCI Denominational/Missions Offices

Full-time missionaries

344

First new church plant undertaken in Geneva in 1992

First International headquarters built in Accra in 1993

Commencement of full time seminary (Anagkazo Bible Training Seminary) in 1997

Commencement of Work of Ministry Conferences in 2004

This data on the church demonstrates not only the national and international nature of its church planting effort but also its ability to train significant numbers of its members, especially the laity, for this work. The statistics are also formidable evidence of the significant progress the LCI is making towards its overall mission of advancing God's kingdom worldwide through church planting.

Christian Literature, Parachurch and Social Ministry of LCI

The full complement of the LCI's ministry includes worldwide evangelism, authoring of Christian literature for promoting church planting and church work in general, training conferences for church planters, pastors and ministers, and social ministry intended to bring relief to the needy, sick and the underprivileged.

Christian Literature

The authorship and publication of Christian literature by Heward-Mills commenced with the launch of his first ten books in the conference room of the Golden Tulip Hotel, Accra on May 16, 1997, including *Beauty, Duality, Born Again, Frugality, Forgiveness Made Easy, Strange Woman, Prodigality, All about Fornication* and *They Went to Hell* (DgTP, 1997). The initial books were printed using local and foreign publishing houses. Paul Gifford²³ records: "Heward-Mills, whose bookshop is the most elaborate, has a publishing empire; in April 2002, thirty-four of his own titles were on sale, most of them handsomely printed in London".

In further advancement of his Christian literature ministry, a retail outlet, the Vision Bookshop, was set up in September 2001, followed by a printing house, The Parchment House, with the late Mrs. Cynthia Sackey as its first manager in 2003²⁴.

Reasoning that God specifically instructed him to write Christian literature in order to become more fruitful, Heward-Mills has focused most of his writings on matters relating to ministerial development and working for God as opposed to general Christian living, including personal material prosperity and other such worldly pursuits. This emphasis, he claims, is undergirded by his desire to motivate many Christians not to become comfortable in their personal conversions but to dedicate their lives to expanding the kingdom of God. He is of the opinion that Christians must be guided by Jesus' teaching not to accumulate earthly wealth (Matt 6:19), but rather to pursue His vision for the harvesting of lost humanity so that they could receive durable heavenly rewards (Matt 6:20, 10:38; John 17:18) (verbal communication, 2012). I have relied liberally on several of these major works, including *Loyalty and Disloyalty* (2005), *The Mega Church* (2008), *Lay People and the Ministry* (2008), *Church Growth: It is Possible* (2010), *Tell Them* (2008) and *Many Are Called* (2009), as primary sources in this study as indicated in the bibliography.

The contribution being made into the religious milieu of worldwide Christianity by Heward-Mills' Christian literature ministry is captured appropriately on the church's official website in the following words: "As part of the discipleship training program, millions of copies of Dag Heward-Mills' literature

²³ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*. (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2004), 36.

²⁴ Amelia Aidoo, (Deputy Manager, Parchment House), in discussion with the author, 2012.

have been published...millions of books have been printed and freely “seeded” in the nations around the world...”.

The vast majority of Heward-Mills’ publications have been received favourably by the LCI pastors and other ministers around the world. In his foreword to Heward-Mills’ church growth book *Church Growth: It is Possible* (2010:vii)²⁵, Yonggi Cho rightly attests: “Dr. Heward-Mills writes many articles for our Church Growth Magazine, which reveals his literary talents, his deep knowledge of the Word of God, and his many applications of church growth...”

However, others have critiqued some of his writings. For instance, during a sermon at his ISI Conference in Accra in July 2010²⁶ and in his book *Those Who Leave You*²⁷ he highlighted negative commentary he had received from certain pastors with regards to his most prominent work on *Loyalty and Disloyalty*. They argued that the most compelling way leaders could earn the loyalties of subordinates is through the demonstration of their good character and not through teaching²⁸.

Although most pastors of the LCI denomination use the founder’s many publications as resources for their personal ministerial development and doctrinal teachings, Heward-Mills himself stresses the need for his pastors to strive to acquire personal conviction for their lives and ministry through regular and effective Bible study, prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit, pointing them to the example of the Berean Christians (Acts 17:10, 11).

The tremendous influence of Heward-Mills’ literature ministry is encapsulated in the fact that not only have they helped his followers to understand his theology of mission and their personal ministerial callings and aspirations for missionary work, but also the centrality of their message, the emphasis on working for God, has attracted and convinced large numbers of these followers to spend their lives engaged in church planting in Ghana and elsewhere.

Parachurch and Social Ministry Activities

The key parachurch activity of the LCI is the Healing Jesus Crusade (HJC), a national and international evangelistic initiative. After pastoring the Lighthouse Chapel Cathedral for several years, Heward-Mills perceived that God had called him to go beyond the church to minister to a wider audience. Starting in a tent in 2003, with a total attendance of 600 people at the AME Zion school park at Dansoman, a suburb of Accra, the HJC has taken the gospel of salvation of Jesus Christ to many villages, towns and cities in Ghana and other parts of Africa with over three million people making decisions for Christ during these crusades. The sole vision of these crusades is to win the lost at all cost²⁹. The crusades are combined with the provision of medical services by the church’s volunteer healthcare professionals to the underprivileged. Toss Mills-Odoi³⁰ explained the rationale for this approach: “The Healing Jesus Crusade ministry believes that Christians care, because it is the nature of Christ within them to care...”.

Other social ministry activities of LCI include an orphanage, Remember-the-Poor, Prison Ministry and the Compassion Centre for the Assistance of the Lame, the Blind, the Underprivileged, the Deaf and Dumb (CCALBUDD). The fundamental purpose of all these social activities is to bring relief to the needy,

²⁵ Dag Heward-Mills, *Church Growth...It is Possible*. (Accra: Parchment House., 2010), vii

²⁶ Building the Church”, Audio Message

²⁷ Dag Heward-Mills, *Those Who Leave You*. (Accra: Parchment House, 2011d),5

²⁸ Dag Heward-Mills, *Those Who Leave You*. (Accra: Parchment House, 2011d),5

²⁹ Dag Heward-Mills, “Lighthouse Chapel International “www.dagwardmills.org/evangelist, accessed 23 Dec 2012

³⁰ Albert T. Mills-Odoi, *The History of the Lighthouse Chapel International*. (M.Th. Dissertation, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Accra, 2008), 133.

sick and the underprivileged in the communities through the provision of food, medicines, clothing and medical aids and equipment³¹.

Toss Albert Mills-Odoi³² states that the salvific theology of Heward-Mills now embraces both evangelism and social action. Elucidating the church's motivation for implementing these social programmes, he quotes Heward-Mills as saying, "An integral part of preaching a complete message of salvation has to be accompanied by a display of the same kind of love Jesus demonstrated." This integral mission is laudable and falls within the accepted norms of other mission-minded agencies. For instance, the proponents of *The Cape Town Commitment*³³ hold the view that integral mission presents a package of gospel proclamation accompanied by a practical demonstration of the love of Christ depicted through social involvement, concluding that, "if we ignore the world, we betray the Word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the Word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although the LCI has been around for a relatively short time, the above appraisal of the church's history shows remarkable and laudable progress. The LCI has indeed grown to become a successful charismatic denomination which is making a positive impact on the religious landscape of Ghana. Its contribution to worldwide evangelism through its church planting efforts is significant. It is also worth noting that the organizational structure, coupled with the effective combination and coordination of both pastoral and administrative sectors, has helped in no small measure in this worldwide expansion. The LCI's governance, leadership and principles of church growth and planting have evolved in the face of several challenges, and a fair share of failures. Its systems are constantly subjected to review to accommodate the challenges of contemporary church work and to provide the ingredients that the church thinks are necessary to guarantee the achievement of its set goals. The growing impact of the LCI denomination is quite evident on the Ghanaian scene, as captured by Prof. David Kpobi, one of the foremost Ghanaian missiologists: "Anyone who has followed the work of the LCI will attest to the fact that it is currently one of the churches with the most significant impact on the Christian scene in Ghana"³⁴.

The following statement by Dr. Yonggi Cho about Heward-Mills³⁵ and the church he founded is also quite instructive: "Dag Heward-Mills has a rare talent in being able to articulate the many areas of expertise that he has gained in his own life and his Lighthouse Chapel International Ministries in countless cities around the world".

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³¹ Bandoh, Eric, *Transforming Lives Through Christian Mission: A case study of Lighthouse Chapel International Social Ministry*. (M.Th. Dissertation, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Accra., 2012), 79,80.

³² Albert T. Mills-Odoi, *The History of the Lighthouse Chapel International*. (M.Th. Dissertation, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Accra, 2008), 118.

³³ The Cape Town Commitment- The Lausanne Movement, (2012); 32-33. A Journal on World Evangelization. 2012, 32-33.

³⁴ *The Pentecostal-Charismatic Impact in Ghanaian Christianity*, Legon, December, 2012

³⁵ Dag Heward-Mills, *The Art of Following*.(Accra: Parchment House, 2012), vii

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