

The Construction of Permanent Church Halls for effective Church Planting: A Model of the Lighthouse Chapel International



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ABSTRACT

The construction of permanent church halls for effective church planting is one of the many models and ideals employed by Bishop Dag Heward-Mills, founder of the Lighthouse Chapel International to rigorously drive its church expansion efforts across the nations of the world. This article accentuates the benefits and significance of the construction of permanent church halls on church growth and expansion and especially its apparent contribution to engendering confidence and commitment of congregants of new churches planted and overall ensuring stability of church membership. The multi-level model, known as the Anagakzo Church Planting Strategy, has been systematically developed by Heward-Mills, and implemented by LCI church planters worldwide. Using a qualitative research approach, the study analyses the use of the Anagakzo church planting strategy model. Data was gathered from relevant literature, interviews with key informants, views from focus group discussions as well as the use of qualitative questionnaires. The study's findings indicate that within a relatively short period of implementing the model, the LCI has successfully undertaken church planting both nationally and internationally. It is being recommended that charismatic churches in Ghana endeavour to make the usefulness of permanent church halls in promoting church planting as part of their mission strategy. This can be achieved by pooling financial resources from all the churches within the particular denomination towards building projects. This would fulfil the biblical injunction for equitable distribution of God's blessings among Christians (2 Cor 8:13-15). The study contributes to research knowledge on Church expansion through church planting.

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INTRODUCTION²

The Lighthouse Chapel International, a charismatic denomination that started almost three decades ago in Korle Gonno, a coastal suburb of Accra-Ghana, has witnessed glowing achievements. It has grown from its humble beginnings by the grace of God from a five member congregation to many congregations worldwide. 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. The years 1988 to 1991 could be described as the formative years of the Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI). After formulating a policy to expand the Church within and outside Ghana through church planting in 1992, the founder undertook the first church planting exercise in Geneva, Switzerland. He launched into church planting, aimed principally at fostering active participation in the realisation of the Great Commission, necessitated development of a centralized strategy to accomplish this vision.

² This paper was adapted from the Authors Master's Dissertation title, Church Expansion through Church Planting in Ghana, - A case study of the Lighthouse Chapel International Model submitted to North-Western University, South Africa in (2013).

For various reasons most charismatic churches in Ghana hold their worship services, often on permanent basis, in temporary premises such as classrooms, public halls, wooden structures, homes and on playing fields. This situation has contributed to hindering the growth and expansion of the charismatic denominations. Holding church services in impermanent locations has the following disadvantages:

1. Instability, since the church could be asked to move at any time, with the real danger of the dispersion of the members.
2. Lack of confidence amongst the congregants in the future of the church, which tends to derail their commitment.
3. Prominent and educated sections of the society tend to shun such worship places, thus depriving such churches of the contributions these people could make available for their development.
4. Stagnation in the general progress and development of such churches.
5. Public contempt for such churches, often associating them with the occult and other non-Christian spiritual groupings.

In an effort to avoid the pitfalls indicated, the LCI has, since 1992,³ implemented the model of constructing permanent church buildings for its missions where possible. The construction of permanent church halls for effective church planting is one of the many models and ideals employed by the church's founder, Bishop Dag Heward-Mills, founder of Lighthouse Chapel International to rigorously drive its church expansion efforts across the nations of the world. This article accentuates the benefits and significance the construction of permanent church halls has on church growth and expansion and especially its apparent contribution to engendering confidence and commitment of congregants of new church plants, and overall ensuring stability of church membership.

This multi-level model, known as the Anagkazo Church Planting Strategy, has been systematically developed by Heward-Mills, and implemented by LCI church planters worldwide.⁴ The author focuses on its apparent contribution to engendering confidence and commitment of congregants of new church plants, and overall ensuring stability of church membership.

This article accentuates the benefits and significance the construction of permanent church halls has on church growth and expansion by analysing the use of the Anagkazo Church planting strategy model.

The Lighthouse Chapel International

The Lighthouse Chapel International was founded in 1988. Initially called The Lighthouse Chapel, it was renamed on the 23rd December 1989 to reflect the intent of the church's founder to contribute to fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ by planting churches around the globe. From a five-member congregation in a small classroom, the church has expanded into what is now the LCI denomination of over 6,000 mission churches in Ghana and more than ninety other countries.⁵ This is an exceptional achievement given that few charismatic denominations in Ghana have been able to attain this level of expansion. This researcher shares the views of David Kpobi, one of Ghana's foremost missiologists, who highlights the impact of the LCI's work in Ghana. He observes:

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. With its policy of aggressive evangelism and a conscious intent at church growth and expansion, the LCI, under the charismatic leadership of its founder, Bishop Heward-Mills, has easily become the preferred church for many young Christians in Ghana today. They appear to be succeeding through sheer commitment to the literal fulfilment of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.⁶

The emergence of the charismatic movement in Ghanaian Christianity brought along with it many new forms of evangelism and nurture which have impacted the religious environment in many ways. This movement has challenged the older churches (Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist) in ways that have far-reaching implications for Ghanaian Christians.⁷ The Lighthouse Chapel International, a relatively young denomination, which has been in existence for the past twenty-five (25) years, is one of the best known of such new churches. The notable proliferation of

³ Unpublished archival LCI Executive Board records, 1992.

⁴ E.A.T.Sackey, (Senior Associate to Bishop Dag Heward-Mills), in discussion with the author, 2012.

⁵ The church website - www.lighthousechapel.org. (*2020 current figures)

⁶ David N.A. Kpobi, A comment made at a seminar on "The Pentecostal-Charismatic Impact in Ghanaian Christianity", at Legon Accra Ghana in December, 2012.

⁷ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Development within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*. (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005) 115-117.

the LCI denomination has attracted keen interest from other churches to learn from LCI's church expansion through its church planting model. This is evidenced, for example, by the increase in the number of affiliates (which are independent of the LCI and known as Family Lighthouse Churches) from 67 in 2009 to 104 in 2013, a rise of 35.5 percent in four years.⁸ Moreover, a number of other churches cherish the LCI's church planting principles and therefore ask the church to train their prospective church planters. The significant propagation of LCI churches has been the result of a deliberate policy by its founder and leaders to start churches in every possible location in order to facilitate the fulfilment of the Great Commission. This policy is aptly embodied in the statement "A church at every door and in every language".⁹ In his book entitled *Church Planting* Heward-Mills founder of the LCI denomination, explains how the planting of churches fulfils the Great Commission:

The more gatherings and groups there are, the more the Great Commission is being fulfilled. The more groups that are taught, the more the Great Commission is being fulfilled. These groups are the churches that are being planted by the obedient servants of the Lord. There is a need to start many gatherings of people in every possible location in order that we fulfil the Great Commission. The vastness of the world and the distribution of people demands that pastors and people move away from one congregational church to multiple gatherings of different locations. If we are really serious in obeying our Lord, then we have no choice than to obey this.¹⁰

The desire to fulfil this commission has over the years resulted in the LCI church mounting an aggressive and relentless effort of church expansion through church planting both in Ghana and elsewhere in the world. A cardinal aspect of the church planting policy of the LCI denomination is embedded in the belief that whereas evangelism, especially massive organized evangelism, is very important in winning the lost into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, this alone is not enough to retain converts in the long-term. E. Mathews asserts in his article "Mass Evangelism: Problems and Potentials" that mass evangelism is riddled with a countless number of problems which ultimately limit its effectiveness in achieving the intended result of gaining and retaining converts.¹¹ Furthermore, according to K. Hadaway "there is no evidence that mass evangelistic events help churches grow"¹². In 1965 Wagner assessed the impact of a year-long evangelistic campaign in Bolivia on church growth in Bolivia and found that the campaign failed to make any significant impact on the rate of growth of the churches associated with the campaign.¹³ Wagner also noted that the percentage of annual growth in the churches was greater during the year preceding the evangelistic campaign than during the two years following the campaign.¹⁴ Mathews however, contends that mass evangelism is still a powerful tool for outreach but should be combined with comprehensive church-centred follow-up through church planting.¹⁵

The foregoing assertions make it imperative for mass evangelism to be combined with church planting to make it more effective towards the conversion of the winnable souls in the world. The views of Wagner and Mathews on mass evangelism resonate with Heward-Mills' interpretation of the "Great Commission" as evangelism followed by planting of churches. The LCI has a lifetime vision to plant at least 25,000 churches in 190 countries.¹⁶ This research project will explore and evaluate the church expansion philosophies, strategies and processes that have contributed to the proliferation of the church to date and that are anticipated to make the vision for 25,000 churches a reality.

The Anagkazo Church Planting Strategy model

A key strategic component of the Anagkazo Church planting strategy model is the systematic construction of permanent church buildings rather than using temporary premises, the latter being a standard practice among the charismatic movement in Ghana.

Anagkazo is a Greek word meaning to compel, to necessitate, or to entreat (Luke 14:23). The context in which this word is used by Jesus in Luke 14:23 gives clear indication of the urgent need for the church to adopt innovative and firm strategies to *compel* and make it necessary for lost souls to enter into the kingdom, given that the world is increasingly cynical to the message of the gospel.¹⁷ The LCI church planting model was hence inspired by this revelation by Jesus. One of the key components of the model include: the construction of permanent church halls for effective

⁸ Unpublished Archival Records, LCI Denominational/Missions Offices.

⁹ Dag Heward-Mills, *Anagkazo, the Compelling Power*. (Dansoman, Accra: Parchment House, 1998a), 5.

¹⁰ Dag Heward-Mills, *Church Planting* (Dansoman, Accra: Parchment House, 2007), 1-3.

¹¹ Ed Mathews, *Mass Evangelism: Problems and Potentials*. *Journal of Applied Missiology*. (Texas: Abilene Christian University (2001, Vol. 4:1).

¹² Kirk Hadaway, *Church Growth Principles: Separating Fact from Fiction*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1991), 29.

¹³ Peter C. Wagner, 1987. *Strategies for Church Growth*. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1987), 140-141.

¹⁴ Ibid., 141

¹⁵ Mathews, *Mass Evangelism: Problems and Potentials*.

¹⁶ Heward-Mills, *Anagkazo, the Compelling Power*, 6.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1-3.

church planting. Other models include; Heward-Mills' doctrine of loyalty as a prerequisite for Church Planting and the involvement of lay people in Church Planting.

Challenges of the model

This strategic component of the Heward-Mills church planting model has its own challenges. Building construction is expensive and spans a long period of time; apart from draining the finances of the church and therefore hindering development in other areas of the local church (recruitment of permanent staff, acquisition of needed sophisticated church equipment and improved remuneration), it has the propensity to drift away from the spiritual focus of the church planter.

METHODOLOGY

Using a qualitative research approach, the study analyses the use of the Anagakzo church planting strategy model. Data was gathered from relevant literature, interviews with key informants, views from focus group discussions as well as the use of qualitative questionnaires. Data gathered is presented and discussed in the findings and discussion section.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In an effort to avoid the pitfalls of holding church services in impermanent structures, the LCI has, since 1992,¹⁸ implemented a policy of constructing permanent church buildings for its missions where possible. In places where the church is unable to construct church buildings for various reasons, especially in Western Europe and America, the LCI acquires industrial buildings and redesigns them for use as permanent church halls. A clear demonstration of the effectiveness of this strategy to impact church planting and catalyse the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the case of the three northern regions of Ghana, areas that are predominantly Islamic. From 1995 to date the LCI has planted close to 300 churches and constructed within the same period, over 130 permanent church halls in this region.¹⁹ Given that the headquarters of the LCI is in Ghana, a developing country, the church's ability to make the huge financial investments required for building construction has been impressive and has not gone unnoticed. Here, it is important to note that although there seems not to be clear biblical justification for adding permanent church halls to the LCI's missiopraxis, it is an efficient pragmatic strategy.

The principles that have ensured the success of this strategy include the following:²⁰

1. All church planters must prioritize ownership of permanent meeting places; this must precede the personal material development of the missionary.
2. The policy of centrally owned and directed finances. Under this financial arrangement, the income of all satellite branches of the LCI that is earned through offerings, tithing and special fundraisings is considered as worldwide denominational holdings.
3. All missionaries are permitted to manage the church income at the local level to take care of both human resource and church development expenditures; the rest of the income is reserved and managed by the Bishops' Council for the undertaking of church building projects worldwide.

A Comparison between LCI and other Charismatic Church Planters

Permanent church buildings generally engender confidence and commitment of congregants of new church plants, and have immeasurably facilitated the denomination's vision of worldwide church expansion. This section would provide data comparing the church planting strategies of LCI and other Charismatic denominations.

¹⁸ Unpublished archival LCI Executive Board records, 1992.

¹⁹ Unpublished archival records, LCI Denominational Office. *(latest figures from same office)

²⁰ Richard Aryee, Senior Bishop, Lighthouse Chapel International, UK, in discussion with the author, 2012.

Table 1a: Number of permanent church buildings owned by non- LCI charismatic church planters in regions of Ghana (Dec. 2012)

Region	Number of denominations with permanent church buildings (n=14)	Average number of permanent church buildings owned by the churches	Range (minimum- maximum)
Ashanti Region	7 (50)	4	1 to 15
Brong-Ahafo Region	4 (28.6)	12	3 to 22
Central Region	6 (42.9)	3	1 to 5
Eastern Region	5 (35.7)	4	1 to 7
Greater Accra Region	6 (42.9)	17	1 to 80
Northern Region	2 (14.3)	3	1 to 5
Upper East Region	1 (7.1)	30	30
Upper West Region	1 (7.1)	25	25
Volta Region	3 (21.4)	4	1 to 6
Western Region	2 (14.3)	8	5 to 10

Table 1b: Number of permanent church halls (not leased) by charismatic denominations in regions of Ghana represented in the study (Dec. 2012)

	REGIONS OF GHANA										
Name Of Church	Ashanti	Brong Ahafo	Central	Eastern	Greater Accra	Northern	Upper East	Upper West	Volta	Western	Total Number Of Permanent Church Halls
LCI	19	6	13	17	58	44	24	4	7	13	209
FC	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
FGC	2	1	0	0	1	8	7	8	1	0	28
TOP	1	22	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	25
HOPM	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
LGM	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
CFC	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	8
VBCI	7	0	5	3	15	0	0	0	4	6	40
WMCI	3	12	4	7	9	5	0	0	6	0	46
ICGC	7	5	8	15	48	1	1	1	5	10	101
CEM	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CF	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
ACI	1	3	1	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	16
GRM	1	0	2	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	13
RHCI	0	1	0	1	12	0	0	0	1	2	17

Table 2: Charismatic denominations and key church planting indicators (Dec 2012)

Name of Church	Number Of Church Planters Trained	Full- Time Church Planters %	Lay Church Planters %	Average Membership For New Church Plants For First Two Years*
LCI	1254	30	70	30
VBCI	120	45	55	80
WMCi	160	90	10	60
ICGC	625	70	30	200
CEM	255	10	90	50
ACI	120	95	5	150
FC	20	100	0	50
LGM	8	80	20	40
TOP	36	100	0	30
RHCI	320	80	20	130
GRM	54	90	10	110
FGC	120	31	69	120
GLCI	216	40	60	70
CFC	40	90	10	50

*Membership indicated as actual average Sunday church attendance

Table 3: Comparative table of number of churches planted in the regions of Ghana (2012)

Name of Church	REGIONS OF GHANA										Total number of churches in Ghana	Percentage distribution
	Ashanti	Brong Ahafo	Central	Eastern	Greater Accra	North-ern	Upper East	Upper West	Volta	Western		
LCI	108	41	83	50	322	102	45	11	52	73	887	45.04
FC	10	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	15	0.76
FGC	6	24	2	3	5	12	44	51	1	7	155	7.87
TOP	2	45	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	52	2.64
HOPM	0	0	2	10	0	0	0	0	2	0	14	0.71
LGM	2	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	0.86
CFC	2	1	15	0	4	0	0	0	0	21	43	2.18
VBCI	13	4	17	8	48	0	0	0	12	9	111	5.63
WMCi	6	15	5	14	41	17	0	1	8	3	110	5.58
ICGC	21	7	24	44	145	18	5	4	10	21	299	15.18
CEM	2	1	3	6	33	1	0	0	20	1	67	3.40
CF	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	1	7	0.35
ACI	12	3	3	5	22	0	0	0	1	2	48	2.43
GRM	2	0	2	7	13	0	0	0	1	1	26	1.32
RHCI	7	6	6	21	36	1	0	1	35	5	118	5.99
TOTALS	191	164	164	171	675	151	94	68	154	147	1969	100

The data from the non-LCI charismatic respondents has been used invariably to engage in a comparative analysis with that of the LCI model. This has clearly demonstrated not only the distinctives but also highlighted the well-defined strengths and weaknesses of the various models. Some of which include Heward-Mills' doctrine of loyalty as a prerequisite for Church Planting and the involvement of lay people in Church Planting.

The only other sharp distinction which sets the LCI's model apart from those of other charismatic churches is the construction and acquisition of permanent church meeting halls. The researcher has elucidated the importance of this factor in promoting the LCI's church planting drive. The aim here is to underscore, as per their responses, the fact that this component seems equally important to most of the surveyed non-LCI charismatic churches. The real evidence on the ground, however, will reveal to any discerning observer that the majority of the charismatic denominations meet in rented premises and not in permanent church halls.²¹ Whereas all the surveyed non-LCI churches have their own permanent headquarters, only a few of their branch churches are housed in permanent structures.

This situation can be attributed to three reasons. First, there is a genuine lack of sufficient finances for mission work, as stated by 57 percent of the respondents. Second, where such finances are abundant, they often inappropriately used to promote the personal lifestyle of the leader, as alleged by Kpobi. He observes,

The churches in Ghana, particularly in the urban centre [the locus of most charismatic churches, addition mine] have been beneficiaries of a new prosperity introduced by the improved economic circumstances of the nation...one significant outcome of the increasing prosperity has been the increasing opulence and extravagance not only on the part of the churches but also more atrociously on the part of their leadership.²²

While Kpobi does not name the perpetrators, it must be admitted that there is an inescapable generalised perception in Ghana that charismatic leaders engage in opulence and extravagance. The admonition by the exponents of *The Cape Town Commitment*²³ to mission leaders to "reject the idolatry of greed" should be one of the cornerstones of the mission strategies of the charismatic church in Ghana. If charismatic mission leaders manage church income more purposefully (this is not to imply that the leaders should not be sufficiently catered for), there will be enough resources which could be channelled into the construction or acquisition of permanent church halls to accelerate the proliferation of stable long-lasting churches, as has been amply demonstrated in the case of the LCI.

The third factor limiting the development of permanent church halls is occasioned by the governance policy of certain charismatic denominations, that is, to run their new church plants or branches as semi-autonomous entities (ICGC, CEM, GRM, FGC and VBCI are examples). In the case of ICGC, for instance, all branches are semi-autonomous, and are mandated to become "self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting". Besides, the branches must have a semi-autochthonous mindset, as observed by Larbi:

Otabil, a strong believer in the indigenous church principle, is convinced in stating that, "I fully believe that wherever God puts you He has enough resources in place to take care of your needs." This emphasis has helped the church to develop on its own initiative, becoming what seems like one of the more prosperous young churches in the country.²⁴

Under the tenets of this policy, once the new church plant has been supported adequately enough to be firmly established (a strength in the church's model already highlighted), all aspects of further development, including acquisition and construction of permanent church halls, becomes the full responsibility of the new church plant/branch. While accepting that the ICGC approach engenders initiative which is needed for progress and development of the branch church, such capital intensive projects like construction of church buildings come at too great a cost to a burgeoning church. Consequently, either the projects are avoided entirely or developed at a tortoise-like pace.

The evidence presented on this point suggests, therefore, that the LCI's strategy of centrally-supported building projects is a better practice. The various advantages associated with ownership of permanent church buildings including security and stability should motivate Ghanaian charismatics to pursue this policy aggressively.

Permanent Church Halls Promote Church Planting

This study has disclosed that generally the charismatic church in Ghana exists in temporary structures, most of which are rented or poorly constructed. This has been a limiting and decelerating factor for charismatic missions. Factors including the unwholesome ambience, suspicion, sense of instability and insecurity for the future render such churches unattractive

²¹ Tables 1a and b.

²² David N.A..Kpobi, *Mission in Ghana: The Ecumenical Heritage*. (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2008), 173.

²³ *The Cape Town Commitment* - The Lausanne Movement, (2010); 43. A Journal on world Evangelization.

²⁴ Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*. (Dansoman, Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001), 340.

to the unchurched, especially those of the middle and upper social classes. Overall, such charismatic congregations have the propensity for chronic stagnation and eventual collapse.

It is abundantly clear from the study that the LCI's well thought-out mission strategy of progressively constructing or acquiring permanent church halls for its new church plants has eliminated the pitfalls associated with impermanent meeting locations and has been greatly effective in promoting the denomination's expansion efforts. It is important to add that this ingredient in the LCI's model has no scriptural justification; however, it has proved to be a useful pragmatic strategy.

The adoption of this strategic policy by the churches of the charismatic leaning in Ghana will undoubtedly improve their fortunes in missions. This, however, will require vision, determination and especially the prudent management of church finances. The often gleefully trumpeted excuse that the poor African economy has affected the financial resources of the church and thus thwarted church building projects is no longer plausible. Kpobi disclosed that overall, the church in Ghana has benefited from the improved economic conditions that emanated from the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) initiated in 1986 by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) of Jerry Rawlings (the then head of Ghana's military government) with support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).²⁵ Kpobi argues correctly that

The churches in Ghana, particularly in the urban centres, have been beneficiaries of a new prosperity introduced by the improved economic circumstances of the nation. Since the beginning of the 1990s therefore, the churches as institutions have been relatively well-off in economic terms, with annual turnovers sometimes exceeding those of some big industrial and commercial concerns. One significant outcome of the increasing prosperity has been the increasing opulence and extravagance not only on the part of the churches but also more atrociously on the part of their leadership. Many church leaders acquired new and often worldly lifestyles as they sought to enter the ranks of the prosperous or successful, if not of the rich and famous.²⁶

Kpobi's assertion is not only revealing but a correct reflection of the undue emphasis on the prosperity gospel by some charismatic churches. It is therefore safe to conclude that, if the mission leaders of the Ghanaian charismatic church will shy away from personal opulence and extravagance and appropriately channel the improved church finances into development, the construction or acquisition of permanent church premises will materialise – a needed ingredient to boost charismatic missions in the 21st Century.

As amply demonstrated in the study, charismatic missions have been undermined severely by the lack of permanent meeting structures. The aim of this research is not to advocate for expensive edifices at the neglect of other important ecclesiastical ministries, including caring for the poor and needy (Matt 25:41-45). The point being emphasized is that the church needs stability to develop in order for it to be able to carry out its ministries of soul-winning, developing spiritual maturity, social ministries and mission. Permanent church buildings can play an important role towards achieving these goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings discussed above the study recommends the following:

- i. The charismatic churches in Ghana must recognize the Great Commission as their *raison d'être*. Therefore, it should consider promoting this imperative vigorously among its congregations and mobilise all resources towards achieving this mandate. In particular, it will be helpful for members of charismatic denominations to be mobilised and equipped to help with the massive harvest (Eph 4:11-13).
- ii. In view of the observations made in the study regarding the usefulness of permanent church halls in promoting church planting, it is recommended that the charismatic churches in Ghana endeavour to add this factor to their mission strategy. It is a practical need, not a biblical and theological requirement. The denomination acting as a corporate entity could direct and finance these projects centrally. This can be achieved by pooling financial resources from all the churches within the particular denomination towards building projects. This would fulfil the biblical injunction for equitable distribution of God's blessings among Christians (2 Cor 8:13-15). A central development office may have to be set up with qualified administrators to implement, supervise and monitor the decisions of the denominational leaders concerning building projects.

²⁵ Kpobi, *Mission in Ghana*, 172..

²⁶ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

This study has clarified that the LCI's well thought-out mission strategy of progressively constructing or acquiring permanent church halls for its new church plants has eliminated the pitfalls associated with impermanent meeting locations and has been greatly effective in promoting the denomination's expansion efforts. It is important to add that this ingredient in the LCI's model has no scriptural justification; however, it has proved to be a useful pragmatic strategy.

Futhermore, the adoption of this strategic policy by the churches of the charismatic leaning in Ghana will undoubtedly improve their fortunes in missions. This, however, will require vision, determination and especially the prudent management of church finances. The often gleefully trumpeted excuse that the poor African economy has affected the financial resources of the church and thus thwarted church building projects is no longer plausible.

The Author is however not advocating for expensive edifices at the neglect of other important ecclesiastical ministries, including caring for the poor and needy (Matt 25:41-45). The point being emphasized is that the church needs stability to develop in order for it to be able to carry out its ministries of soul-winning, developing spiritual maturity, social ministries and mission. Permanent church buildings can play an important role towards achieving these goals.

What is more is that, since this work is a pioneering one in this field, the few published references for the researcher to refer to it is necessarily limited. However, the study provides much information that is currently unavailable about the LCI and its processes, of growth and expansion through church planting and also makes a contribution to the history and process of mission work in Ghana particularly from the charismatic perspective. This work, will also provide the basis and springboard for researchers interested in this field to do further studies.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Bishop Dr. Emmanuel L. Nterful is a trained Medical Doctor from Vitebsk State Medical Institute, Former Soviet Union and has a Master of Arts Degree in Missiology from the Greenwich University in the United Kingdom and the North-West University, South Africa. He is the current Vice Chancellor of the Anagkazo Bible Seminary, Mampong Ghana. He is also currently the Resident Bishop of the Life Cathedral of the Angakazo Assemblies of the UDOLGC (United Denomination Originating from the Lighthouse Group of Churches).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Anagkazo Bible School
LCI	Lighthouse Chapel International
CEM	Charismatic Evangelistic Ministry

ACI	Action Chapel International
RHCI	Royalhouse Chapel International
FC	Family Chapel
HOPM	House of Prayer Ministries
TOP	Temple of Praise
GRM	Global Revival Ministries
LGM	Living Grace Ministries
CFC	Christian Faith Church
ICGC	International Central Gospel Church
FGC	Fountain Gate Chapel
GLIC	Gospel Light International Church
VBCI	Victory Bible Church International
WMCi	Word Miracle Church International
COP	Church Of Pentecost