

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

**EFFECTIVE PRINCIPLES FOR HEALTHY CHURCH GROWTH IN THE 21ST
CENTURY: A DESCRIPTIVE MEASURE OF LIGHTHOUSE CHAPEL
INTERNATIONAL – GHANA**

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JULY 2015

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INTERNATIONAL – GHANA**

SUBMITTED BY

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DECLARATION

I Eric Kofi Adjei, do hereby declare that this thesis/dissertation/project report is the result of my own original research, except for sections for which references have been duly made, and to the best of my knowledge, no part of it has been presented to this University College or any other institution for the award of a degree.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation, “Effective Principles for Healthy Church Growth in the 21st Century: A Descriptive Measure of Lighthouse Chapel International” sought to investigate the relationship between church health and church growth using Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI) as a model. There seems to be a gap in knowledge as to what makes churches grow within the Ghanaian context and this study sought to find out whether the health of a church is a contributing factor to its growth. Data was collected from two major branches of LCI; the main branch, Qodesh-Accra and True Vine Cathedral, Bantama, Kumasi. Questionnaires based on the eight quality characteristics of healthy growing churches as proposed by Christian A. Schwarz, were administered to a total of one hundred and twenty respondents, and a descriptive measure was used to analyse the scores. It was found out that Lighthouse Chapel International is a healthy church and the health is a contributing factor to its growth. It was also discovered that quality and quantity are not in opposition to each other. They are not mutually exclusive. A church does not have to choose between the two. Every church should desire both. An exclusive focus on either quality or quantity will produce an unhealthy church. The limitation of this work is based on the fact that LCI was assessed based on the contribution of church health to growth, however, there are other factors aside church health that contributes to growth which can also be investigated. The findings indicate LCI’s strengths which can serve as an example for all LCI branches and other churches, and the weak areas which need to be improved. In the future, other churches can be investigated since there seem to be little knowledge on how Ghanaian Churches can maintain a healthy church as the numbers increase.

DEDICATION

This work is first and foremost dedicated to God Almighty for bringing me this far. Secondly I dedicate it to my lovely mother, Rose Asante. She is the reason I decided to further my education. I also dedicate to my personal pastor, Rev. Patrick Owusu, whom I consider a spiritual father and a Shepherd. And then finally, to Lady Pastor Linda Amoako (Dean of Students-CSUC), I say thanks for your encouragement, moral and spiritual support. I shall forever be grateful.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The history of the Church Growth Movement is linked to the publication of Donald A. McGavran's book *The Bridges of God*¹. McGavran is known to be the founding father of the church growth movement. His observations and discussions on how churches grow went beyond theological factors to include sociological factors that affect how people receive the gospel. For him, church growth is “an enterprise devoted to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and to persuading men to become His disciples and dependable members of His Church”¹

Peter Wagner who is also a leader in the church Growth movement, defines it as “all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with him and into responsible church membership”²

Church Growth has been part of God’s divine plan ever since Jesus began his earthly ministry till today. His desire is that every church, regardless of its size will grow numerically and spiritually. Jesus says, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John.15:8, KJV).

He goes on to say in the verse 16 of the same chapter, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain...” (John 15:16, KJV)

¹Donald A, McGavran,, *Understanding Church Growth*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans ,1980), p26.

²Peter C Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow:Seven vital signs of a healthy church*, (Glendale, CA: Regal Books ,1976), p12.

This means that Jesus expects the church not only to evangelize, but to also bring in souls and make them remain in the church where they can grow spiritually.

Church growth is broader than evangelism. It covers areas such as worship, church planting, spiritual gifts, welfare and everything that makes churches grow.

In recent times, there has been a rapid growth of Christianity in Africa, Asia and even South America. It is now one of the two most widely practised religions in Africa. The growth in the number of Christians in Africa has brought a decline in adherence to Traditional African Religions. Studies show that there were only 8.7 million adherents of Christianity in Africa in the 1900s, but now there are 390 million. The number is expected to increase to 600 million by 2025.³

Ghana has had its fair share in the growth of Christianity in Africa. Ghana is now known not only as peaceful, but also as profoundly religious. This is evidenced by the growing Christian population in the country⁴.

Christianity came to Ghana in early 15th century, when Roman Catholic missionaries accompanied the earliest Portuguese traders to the then Gold Coast.⁴ There were different kinds of religion practised by different cultural groups but Christianity took over as the Europeans took over the land. The combined efforts and work done by a succession of missionary societies resulted in a large population becoming Christians by the 20th century. By the year 2000,

³Phiri, I., & Maxwell, J. (2007) *Gospel Riches: Africa's rapid embrace of prosperity in Pentecostalism provokes concern--and hope*. Retrieved from Christian Today website: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/july/12.22.html>.

⁴Amanor, J. (2004). *Pentecostalism in Ghana: An African Reformation*. Retrieved from Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research website: <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj13/amanor.html>.

Christians made up 69 per cent of the population of Ghana.⁵ A decade later, the number increased from 69 to 71.2 per cent out of the total Ghanaian population.⁶ The growth may be attributed to the emergence and proliferation of various church denominations across the cities and towns. However, we find that as the numbers increase, the focus of many churches shifted from how to bring people from the kingdom of darkness to light or how to bring salvation to them that are lost. The attention is now on how to increase church membership and how to raise funds to put up huge structures. However, being a church member does not necessarily make one a member of the body of Christ. One needs to be faithful to the Lord and His word also as it is written; “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2, KJV).

Having said that, care must be taken not to equate growth to an increase in church membership alone, but to also consider the spiritual growth of the members and their faithfulness to God and His word. This is what makes a church healthy.

In his book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren insists that the key issue for churches in the twenty-first century should be church health, not church growth.⁷ His assertion is that when congregations are healthy, they will grow in ways that God intends. Healthy Churches do not need gimmicks to grow, they grow naturally. He further says that a great commitment to the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) will grow a great church.⁸ He suggests that the church must identify and pursue five missions to

⁵Ghana Statistical Service (2000). *Ghana - Population and Housing Census 2000*. Retrieved from the Ghana Statistical Service website: http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/nada/index.php/catalog/3/related_materials.

⁶Ghana Statistical Service (2010). *Ghana - Population and Housing Census 2010*. Retrieved from the Ghana Statistical Service website: http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/pop_stats.html.

⁷Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 102.

⁸Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 1.

fulfill its purpose. These are; worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and missions. Therefore as the numbers increase, it is also important to find out how healthy churches are today.

The researcher has chosen The Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI) as his model for this research. This is because LCI is one of the fastest-growing charismatic denominations in Ghana with approximately 1500 branches in over sixty-two countries on five continents⁹. Despite its existence for over 25 years, there is no knowledge about how the leaders are able to maintain its health as the numbers increase. A critical study of their growth principles, subsequent applications and sustenance of that growth, will help other churches and eventually, the body of Christ, to fulfil the commandment to go into all the world to teach and make disciples. (Matt 28:18-20).

1.2 Statement of Problem

Churches in Ghana have experienced a considerable numerical growth in the past decade. But the issue is how healthy are they? To increase in numbers but poor in health defeats the purpose for growth. God is concerned about quality not just quantity. He is concerned about the health of each member as He is about the entire body. This is because the health of each member contributes to the growth of the whole body.

Paul explains it like this; “It is from him that all the parts of the body are cared for and held together. So it grows in the way God wants it to grow” – (Col. 2:19, New Century Version).

It has become expedient therefore, to find out what principles can be put in place to ensure that a church maintains its health as it grows in numbers.

⁹<http://www.lighthousechapel.org/lci2/index.php/about-us/history>

1.3 Research Questions

The questions which the research will address are the following:

- i. How can a church grow numerically, and maintain its health at the same time?
- ii. What makes LCI a healthy Church?
- iii. How does the health of LCI contribute to its growth?

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

- i. to understand the biblical view of church growth
- ii. to find out various principles for church growth identified by scholars
- iii. to evaluate the health of LCI based on the Natural Church Development (NCD) approach, developed by Christian Schwarz.
- iv. to find out how a church can grow in numbers without compromising health.

1.5 Scope and Focus of the Study

This research is to ascertain the nature and characteristics of a healthy church according to Church Growth scholars. The discussions will be made with reference to the Lighthouse Chapel International, Ghana.

1.6 Methodology

A combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods is employed for this research. Critical observation, interviews and questionnaires¹⁰, are used to obtain data from respondents. Church services have been attended to observe what goes into their services, the service structure, the after service meetings and the general atmosphere in the church. Some church members have been interviewed, and some have filled in questionnaires.

1.7 Literature Review

The Church Growth Movement originated from a recognizable fact that some churches on a mission field were growing and others were not. The search to find out what makes churches grow has resulted in today's Church Growth Movement. A good portion of literature on the subject of missions and evangelism today is written from a Church Growth perspective. Students of church growth strive to combine the eternal theological principles of God's Word concerning the expansion of the Church with the best insights of contemporary social and behavioural sciences, employing as the initial frame of reference the foundational work done by Donald McGavran. McGavran, who is known as the 'father' of church growth, was highly influenced by Bishop J. Wascom Pickett's book, *Christian Mass Movements in India* (1993). Pickett illustrates through case study that Christianity spreads easily along social units than across social units. McGavran expands on Pickett's work in his book to publish his book, *Bridges to God*. McGavran's *Bridges to God*¹¹ together with *Understanding Church Growth*¹² form the basic texts of the church growth movement. His underlying convictions on church growth can be

¹⁰The likert-type of scaling is employed to prepare and analyze the questionnaires.

¹¹ D. A. McGavran., *The Bridges of God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955).

¹²D. A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.

described in three concepts. Having graduated from Yale Divinity School in 1920, McGavran entered the missions field with a social gospel approach to mission work, having a normative value of the authority of the scriptures, but gradually moved to a more conservative theological stance. He writes, “I saw clearly that unless the Bible was accepted as God’s authoritative, infallible revelation, there was no reason at all for missionary labors.”¹³ Secondly, McGavran observed that more effort seemed to be directed toward remaking the people into the image of the culture of the missionaries rather than into the image of God. He urges therefore that people become sincere practising Christians, while remaining ethnically, culturally and economically themselves. The missionary should seek to understand the culture of the people he is working and not to change them, unless the practices contradict scripture¹¹. The third concept is that the effectiveness of evangelism must be measured with outward growth. McGavran took time to investigate what makes some churches grow while others do not¹².

Peter Wagner, who was a student and successor of McGavran at Fuller Theological Seminary, agrees to this concept stating that it is God’s will that his lost people be found and evangelism therefore is not just proclaiming the gospel but making disciples. Church Growth Movement tends to equate discipleship with membership. To this, Wagner says, “We need to measure the outcome of our activities in some way and responsible church membership is a reasonable measurement – reasonable because it is visible while faith is not.”¹⁴ From all outward indications there is a genuine, fervent desire on the part of those involved in the Church Growth Movement to bring as many into the fold as possible in the time the Lord gives us before his return. It is this desire that spurs them on to a pragmatic examination of mission methodologies, to use what

¹³D. A. McGavran, *Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate* (1989), p 57.

¹⁴Wagner, C. Peter, *Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for Effective Mission and Evangelism* (Venture: Regal Books, 1987). P.54

works and discard what does not. Though this does not appear to be the intention of Church Growth practitioners, there is the tendency for there to be a shift in emphasis from creating faith to creating church members. Upon examining the writings of Donald McGavran, Professor E.H. Wendland of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary wrote, “One does not get too far into McGavran’s writings without coming to an uneasy feeling that one is dealing with a supersalesman, who in his enthusiasm is becoming guilty of overselling his product.”¹⁵ Because of this issue, modern day proponents of church growth have now shifted their focus from church growth to ‘church health,’ to seek quality not just quantity.

In his book, *The Purpose Driven Church*¹⁶, Rick Warren, who is the senior pastor of the Saddleback Church, also associates church growth and true maturity with quality, not just quantity. He believes that growth in quality will result in quantity. He admonishes churches to pursue health not growth, using Acts 2 as the basis to support his principle. He suggested that for a church to become healthy, the church must identify and pursue five purposes to fulfil its purpose. These are; worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and missions. The five purposes he identified, became the fertile soil for the revival which made the Saddleback Church grow into a mega-church in the United States. The purpose-driven church is one of the best practical applications of genuine and sound biblical church growth principles for the 21st century church.

Christian A. Schwarz, a German church growth scholar, believes that growth occurs naturally if the right principles are adopted. His book *Natural Church Development*¹⁷ was birthed out of extensive research of churches around the world. He states that natural church growth refers to learning from nature, and learning from nature means learning from the principles of God’s

¹⁵E.H. Wendland, “Church Growth Theology” (*Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, vol 78, no 2, April 1981), p 112.

¹⁶Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

¹⁷Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development*. St. Charles, IL: Church Smart Resources, 2000.

creation. Also, learning from the principles of God's creation means learning from the principles of God's word. Therefore, he emphasizes that the church should not base its growth on the grounds and principles of social or philosophical methods, but on God's word. Gene Getz who is the senior pastor at Fellowship Bible Church in Dallas, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and also at the Moody Bible Institute, also agrees that the basis to elevate and grow the church is the word of God. He sees the New Testament as the fundamental story of the church of which he writes that, it is impossible to see the church upgrade and grow without the insight and realization of the stories of the churches in the New Testament.¹⁸ He is an expert in church planting and has planted some hundred churches in the United States and other places across the Globe.

In the book; *What is A Healthy Church? Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*,¹⁹ Dever Mark discusses what an ideal church is, the difference between an ideal church and other churches, and more importantly, how it acts differently in society. The book highlights the key characteristics of a healthy church: expositional preaching, biblical theology, and a right understanding of the gospel. Dever admonishes us to develop those characteristics in our own churches and challenges all believers to do their part as required of them to maintain the local church.

George Barna however, approaches Church growth from a different perspective. He stresses the importance of change for the church in the future. In this book; *The Second Coming of the Church*,²⁰ he reveals the moral and spiritual decline within the society and how the church seems to have become stagnant. He discusses from a sociological point of view and by his data and research, he is convinced that the church must re-invent itself to be aware of what is

¹⁸Getz, Gene A. *The Measure of a Healthy Church: How God Defines Greatness in a church*. Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 2002.

¹⁹Dever, Mark. *What is A Healthy Church? Nine marks of a healthy church*. Crossway,2007

²⁰George, Barna. *The Second Coming of the Church*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998.

happening in the 21st Century. After this publication, many pastors who desire to experience revival and church growth began to insist on change and reform.

Dag Heward-Mills is also of the opinion that fighting for commitment and retention evangelism are major keys to growing a church²¹. He talks about establishing church members, industrialization in the essence of churning out matured Christians to join in the work of the ministry, and addresses several church growth principles, some of which are discussed later in the report.

1.8 Relevance of the Study

No Church can seek growth and ignore health. Health is the foundation for growth. When a baby is born, we do not expect it to grow overnight. We just care for the health and wellbeing of that baby with the expectation that once the baby is healthy, growth will come naturally. The same principle applies to the church. The church grows naturally once it is healthy and properly cared for. The relevance of this study is to show pastors and church leaders, how they can ensure that their churches are in good health. Good health will therefore put the church in a better position for consistent growth.

1.9 Structure of the Work

This dissertation is written according to the following structure;

The first chapter, the introduction discusses the background to the study, the statement of problem, research questions, aims and objectives, the methodology, scope of the research, literature review, relevance of study and structure of the work.

²¹Dag Heward-Mills, *The Mega Church*, Parchment House, 2011

Chapter two will look at the biblical definition, nature and purpose of the Church.

Chapter three will deal with the principles for healthy church growth as suggested by scholars and pastors.

Chapter four will assess the health of LCI, based on the eight quality characteristics of healthy growing churches.

Chapter five will conclude the dissertation and make useful recommendations for LCI and Ghanaian churches, in general.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL DEFINITION, NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Many Christians think of the Church as a building or physical structure, but the New Testament understanding of Church is different. In the New Testament, the Church usually refers to the people of God called and embodied in Christ. The Christian Church refers to the entire believers who worship God through Christ and therefore cannot be limited to a building or a particular denomination. This chapter discusses the definition, nature and purpose of the church, in order to have a proper understanding and clear meaning of the church.

2.1 The Biblical Definition of the Church

2.1.1 Brief historical background

The word “Church” as we know it today does not appear in the Old Testament, although there were Jewish temples and synagogues. The church began after the resurrection of Christ. It was founded upon the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ. Particularly, the beginning of the church was brought about after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1). In the words of Charles Ryrie²², the church is built upon Jesus’ resurrection, for the Lord was made head of the church after God “raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:20). This shows that there could be no church, until it was purchased with Christ’s precious blood (Eph. 5:25-27), until He arose to give it resurrected life (Col. 3:1-3), until He ascended to be head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:20-23), and until the Spirit came on Pentecost, through which the church was formed into one body by the

²²Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), 133-140.

baptism of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit plays a major role in the formation of the church. It is the Spirit who baptizes people into Christ, indwells them, seals them and joins them into one body with Christ being the head (1 Cor. 12:13).

2.1.2 Definition of “Church”

The term “Church” came out of the Greek term ἐκκλησία, transliterated as "*ekklesia*" which generally refers to an assembly but is usually translated as Church. The term ἐκκλησία appears 114 times in the New Testament, in reference to local communities (e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:2) and in a universal sense to mean all believers.²³ It appears in two verses of the Gospel of Matthew, twenty-four verses of the Acts of the Apostles, fifty-eight verses of the Pauline Epistles, two verses of the Letter to the Hebrews, one verse of the Epistle of James, three verses of the third epistle of John, and nineteen verses of the book of Revelation.²⁴

The word *ekklesia* is used in the following senses in the New Testament:

- i. It is translated "assembly" in the ordinary classical sense (Acts 19:32, 39, 41).
- ii. A few Christians associated together in observing the ordinances of the gospel are an ecclesia (Rom 16:5; Col 4:15).
- iii. The whole body of professing Christians throughout the world (1Co 15:9; Gal 1:13; Mat 16:18) are the church of Christ.
- iv. All the Christians in a particular city, whether they assembled together in one place or in several places for religious worship, were a congregation. Thus all the disciples in

²³McKim, Donald K., *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, (Westminster John Knox Press, 1996)

²⁴"Ekklesia: A Word Study". *Acu.edu*. Retrieved 3 September 2013

Antioch, forming several congregations, were one church (Acts 13:1); so also we read of the "church of God at Corinth" (1Co 1:2), "the church at Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1), "the church of Ephesus" (Rev 2:1), etc.

- v. It denotes the whole body of the redeemed, all those whom the Father has given to Christ, the invisible catholic church (Eph 5:23, 25, 27, 29; Heb 12:23).

In its basic definition, the church is a people, called by God in Christ. John Oak describes the church as the living, systematic and public expression of God's sovereignty initiated by Christ's incarnation.²⁵ It represents the whole number of regenerated persons specifically from Pentecost (Acts 2) united organically to one another and to Christ by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:5; Col. 2:10-12). According to Ephesians 1:22-23, Christ is the head and the church is the body of Christ. The Church is a holy temple which serves as a habitation of God, through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:21-22). Apostle Paul speaks of the Church as the 'bride' of Christ (Ephesians 5:30-31), espoused to Him as a pure virgin to one husband (2 Cor. 11:2-4).

There are six theological definitions given by Dr. Towns Elmer²⁶. They are as follows:

- i. A church is an assembly of professing believers.
- ii. The unique presence of Jesus Christ dwells in a church.
- iii. A church is under the discipline of the Word of God.
- iv. A church is organized to carry out the Great Commission.
- v. A church administers the ordinances.

²⁵Oak, John H. *Healthy Christians Make a Healthy Church*. (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004), 73.

²⁶Towns, Elmer L. *A Practical Encyclopedia: Evangelical and Church Growth*. Ventura: Regal, 1995.

vi. A church reflects the spiritual gifts

In a nutshell, the church is a divine group, founded on the sacrificial blood of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. It is the people of God, body of Christ and community of believers who fellowship with God, through the Holy Spirit.

2.2 Nature of the church

Down through the centuries various theologians have sought to determine what distinguishes a church from other forms of gathering. There are some features and characteristics that help to identify the true church founded by Jesus Christ. Attempt is made in this section to identify the characteristics and nature of the New Testament Church.

2.2.1 Characteristics of the Church

A careful study of the statements made by Jesus in Matthew 16:18-20 reveals at least, seven characteristics of the church. He speaks of its foundation, certainty, intimacy, identity and continuity, invincibility, authority and spirituality.²⁷

In Matthew 16:18 (KJV), Jesus speaks of the rock upon which He will establish His church. He says, “And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

The Roman Catholic Church, in interpreting this scripture, holds the view that Peter is the rock upon which the church is built. Therefore, Peter is the first pope from whom the Catholic papacy descended. However, the rest of the New Testament makes it clear that Christ alone is the

²⁷John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 16-23* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 28-34.

foundation and head of the Church (1 Cor. 3:11). On the other hand, many Protestants believe that the word 'rock' refers to Peter's confession; and that he meant to say, upon this rock; "this truth that thou hast confessed, that I am the Messiah-and upon confessions of this from all believers," that I will build my church. Jesus did not say He will build His church on the personality of Peter, He said he will build it on the meaning of Peter's name which is 'Rock'. The term 'Rock' metaphorically stands for strength and stability. So the conclusion is that the Church is founded on the solidity and strength of the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Also, in the same verse (Mathew 16:18), Jesus declares; I will build my church. The church is built by Christ and therefore no man can take credit for it. No matter how religious, liberal, fanatical, ritualistic, the adherents may be, or no matter how decadent the rest of the world may become, Christ has built His church. If the church therefore is being built by Christ, then it shall be able to withstand all forms of oppressions and oppositions. In the midst of turmoil and persecutions, the church will survive because it is something that is established and built by God Himself.

Another characteristic of the church is that it belongs to Christ. Born of His Spirit (Acts 2:18), purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28). God promised to pour out His spirit upon all flesh. The spirit that overshadowed Mary to form Christ was the same Spirit that was used to give birth to the church on the day of Pentecost. The church therefore is of Christ because it is His spirit that was used to give birth to the church.

Furthermore, Jesus spoke of the invincibility of the church, He said; "the gate of Hades shall not prevail against it". This means that Jesus will set free those who have been imprisoned by Satan

and his agents. An example of a physical manifestation of this is in Acts 16 where Paul and Silas were delivered from prison miraculously. By reason of the blood of Jesus, the church shall be able to conquer the enemy and overcome sin which has kept them in bondage. Even death can no longer reign over the Church because Jesus conquered sin and death on behalf of the Church (Romans 6:9).

Finally, Jesus spoke about the authority of the church. “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” He said; “and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”(Matt. 16:19, KJV). A *key* is an instrument for opening a door. He that is in possession of it has the power of access, and has a general care and administration of a house. Hence, in the Bible, a key is used as a symbol of superintendence, an emblem of power and authority.

2.2.2 Metaphors for the church

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which an expression is used to refer to something that it does not literally denote in order to suggest a similarity.²⁸ The New Testament gives rich metaphorical presentations in the description of the Church. This richness of descriptions precludes a narrow concept of the church and warns against magnification of one aspect and disregard of others.²⁹

Below is a brief discussion on some of the metaphors used to describe the church:

²⁸The Sage English Dictionary, *The sequence software publishers*, 2005

²⁹Elmer Towns, *A Practical Encyclopedia: Evangelism and Church Growth*, 19.)

2.2.2.1 The body of Christ

This is the most prominent of the metaphors used to describe the church. It emphasizes the union of Christ and members of the church. It presents Christ and the church as one human body with Christ being the head (Colossians 1:18) and the Church being the body. This shows that Christ is very much concerned with the church as He is about His own body. Everything that affects the church affects him also. He therefore guides and protects the church as he would his body. In Ephesians 1:22-23, the Apostle Paul reveals that God has put “all things under his (Christ) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all” (KJV).

There may be different church denominations and Christian organizations but only one true church. Just as the physical body is made of interrelated parts that work together for the body to function well, so is the church; the body of Christ, made up of interconnected parts which depend on each other to function in carrying out the great commission. Just as the body is a unity and yet many parts, and the parts, though many, form one body, so it is with Christ the Messiah, For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, and all made to drink of one spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-13, KJV).

2.2.2.2 The Bride of Christ

In Ephesians 5:22-32, Paul speaks of a great mystery concerning Christ and the church. In his presentation, the relationship of Christ and the church is depicted using a man and wife relationship. Paul admonishes wives to submit themselves unto their own husbands even as the church is subject to Christ who is the head and saviour of the body. As a man loves his wife so does Christ love the church and by reason of his love, gave himself as a sacrifice (verse 29). Paul

goes on to say that “we (*church*) are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man (*Christ*) leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife (*church*), and they two shall be one flesh (verse 30:31).

Other New Testament verses where the church is presented as the bride of Christ include,

"...Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." Rev 21:9 (KJV)

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:2, KJV).

As human marriage involves love, intimacy and oneness, so is the relationship of Christ and his bride (the church).

2.2.2.3 The Temple of the Holy Spirit

Jesus, before leaving the earth promised his disciples the Holy Spirit. He said; “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; (John 14:16, KJV). This promise was synonymous with the prophecy in Joel 2:28 that God will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. The literal fulfilment of this prophecy was on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1). Jesus said that He will abide with us forever, meaning that there is going to be an indwelling of the Spirit. So Paul reveals that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) since God no longer dwells in temples made with hands (Acts 7:48). The fact that Christians are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit is also indicated in passages such as John 7:38-39; 20:22; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9; and 1 Corinthians 12:3.

2.2.2.4 The People of God

The church is an assembly of people who are called and chosen by God. They are called out of the world, sanctified with the blood of Jesus to become partakers of the divine nature. The Church was called and chosen in Christ, even before the foundation of the world to be presented holy and blameless before God (Ephesians 1:4). In the words of Peter, the church is a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, called out of darkness into light to show forth the praises of God (1 Peter 2:9). Because of this divine call, people who in times past did not know God, have now become the people of God (1 Peter 2:10). These people are called out from every nation and ethnic background which includes both Jews and Gentiles (1 Corinthians 1:24).

2.3 Purpose of the church

The whole world lies in wickedness and the bondage of sin. There are numerous reports of wars, terrorism, robbery, rape, child molestation and many other forms of sinful behaviour. God wants His will to be done on earth and His will can only be accomplished through the church. So the church is made to be the light of the world which is full of darkness (Matthew 5:14). It is therefore important for the church to identify its purpose in order to fulfil its call. This purpose is identified and outlined by different scholars.

Rick Warren outlines the five missions of the church as follows:

- i. Outreach: missions and evangelism
- ii. Worship: magnify and exalt God
- iii. Fellowship: encourage each other to join membership

- iv. Discipleship: spiritual maturity through teaching of the word of God
- v. Ministry: service and reaching out to the needy world.

Milliard Erickson suggests four purposes of the church:³⁰

- i. Evangelism: The church should be committed to the spreading of the gospel
- ii. Edification: Although Jesus laid greater emphasis upon evangelism, the edification of believers is logically prior
- iii. Worship: The church must fellowship with God through worship
- iv. Social concern: Christians must show love and compassion to others.

George Peters mentions three missions of the church:³¹

- i. The upward purpose is based on who God is and the power and greatness of Jesus Christ. This includes worship, adoration, praise, and intercession.
- ii. The inward purpose includes fellowship, education, edification, and discipline.
- iii. The outward purpose to the world includes evangelism, service, instruction, and reproof.

Robert Lightner speaks of three missions of the Church in the world:³²

- i. The exaltation of the Saviour and the Scripture,
- ii. The edification of the people of God,
- iii. The evangelization of the lost.

³⁰Millard, J Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 1052-1059

³¹George W. Peter, *A Theology of Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), p186-187.

³²Robert P. Lightner, *Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), p235.

2.4 Conclusion

In summary, we find that evangelism is the main purpose emphasized by all four scholars. This is because the great commission is of great importance that Jesus mentioned it in all four gospels, as well as the book of Acts. The main function of the church is to preach the good news of salvation to them that are lost, and win souls for Christ. Every other mission is a subset of the great commission.

CHAPTER THREE

PRINCIPLES FOR HEALTHY CHURCH GROWTH AS SUGGESTED BY SCHOLARS AND PASTORS

3.1 History of the Church Growth Movement

Before we look at a brief history of modern church growth movement, it is expedient that the term church growth be defined. Church growth can be defined as follows:

- i.* An enterprise devoted to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and to persuading men to become His disciples and dependable members of His Church.³³
- ii.* All that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership.³⁴
- iii.* Church growth is that discipline which investigates the nature, expansion, planting, multiplication, function, and health of Christian churches as they relate specifically to the effective implementation of Christ's Commission to "make disciples of all nations"³⁵

Church Growth Movement goes beyond evangelism. It includes everything that makes churches grow. However, Peter Wagner writes; church growth is not some magic formula, which can produce growth in any church at any time. It is just a collection of common sense ideas that seem

³³Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (1980), p 26.

³⁴Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (1976), p 12

³⁵*Growth Partners*, vol. 3 no 3, (1986), p 1.

to be on track with biblical principles which are focused on attempting to fulfil the Great Commission more effectively than ever before.³⁶

The Church Growth Movement was born out of a response to critical observations of churches on the mission field. Some churches in the mission field were growing rapidly while others were growing slowly or not growing at all. The findings and answers obtained after investigating this phenomenon led to the emergence of the Church Growth Movement.

The Movement is deeply rooted in the works of Donald A. McGavran, a third generation missionary to India in the 1930s. He was a missionary of the United Christian Missionary Society and served in India for twenty eight years out of which he spent eight years moving across the globe researching and testing his church growth theories.

McGavran examined the numerical growth of his disciples of Christ denomination in India and other denominations within the same region and discovered that only ten per cent were experiencing significant growth. Majority of the churches were not growing at all, while few others were experiencing as much as hundred per cent growth yearly. He also discovered that the word evangelism has been confused with baptism, catechism classes, and church membership.

His stay in the mission field made him gravitate toward a more conservative theological stance. There are three strands of thought that influenced his point of view regarding growth and non-growth of churches;

Firstly, McGavran saw clearly that unless the Bible was accepted as God's authoritative, infallible revelation, there was no reason at all for missionary work. The Bible is God's

³⁶C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (1984), p 43.

authoritative, infallible revelation and therefore needs to be taken seriously in the mission Christ himself gave to the church. This, according to McGavran is “the theological conviction underlying the Church Growth Movement.”³⁷

Secondly, McGavran sought to change only the religion of the people to which he evangelized and not their culture. He felt that there is no need to change the culture of the people, unless it contradicts scripture. He observed that the Western missionaries tried to remake the people into the image of their culture rather than into the image of God. The missionary should seek to understand the culture of the people group among whom he is working because difference in culture does not suggest inferiority. He believed that the Church Growth Movement urges that people become sincere practising Christians, while remaining ethnically, culturally, and economically themselves.³⁸

Thirdly, McGavran believed also, that effective evangelism should be measured by the growth rate. The effectiveness of missions should be directly proportional to an outward growth. In other words, the results determine how effective the mission is. In addition to these, McGavran identified four major questions that were to drive the Church Growth Movement:³⁹

1. What are the causes of church growth?
2. What are the barriers to church growth?
3. What are the factors that can make the Christian faith a movement among some populations?
4. What principles of church growth can be reproduced?

³⁷Donald A. McGavran, *Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate* (1989), p 57.

³⁸Donald A. McGavran, *Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate* (1989), p 59

³⁹Paul E. Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004) , p 12.

These are the fundamental questions that the Movement seeks to answer.

McGavran's work in essence, changed the methods by which missionaries identify and prioritize groups of persons for missionary work, which stimulated the Church Growth Movement.

In the 1970's, Peter Wagner, a student of McGavran and a professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological , steadily rose to the top as the chief spokesperson for the American Church Growth Movement. His writings and his influential platform as a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary made the Movement gain some level of acceptance. His students who were denominational leaders, pastors and missionaries adopted his church growth principles.

Peter Wagner points out that the book; *'Bridges to God'* deals with four primary issues, each of which have become a cornerstone of the Church Growth Movement.⁴⁰

First is the theological issue: God desires that his lost children be found. It is therefore important not to just proclaim the gospel but also to make disciples. Second is an ethical issue: Pragmatism. All efforts should be evaluated by their results, which are measurable primarily in numbers.

Thirdly, the book deals with a mission-related issue: McGavran states that; "People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers." He developed this principle in more detail in the book *'Understanding Church Growth.'* The fourth issue is what Wagner terms as a procedural issue: Recognizing and acting on the difference between discipleship and perfection. McGavran saw that instead of spending enough time and energy making new disciples, the missionaries were spending too much time perfecting those they had evangelized.

⁴⁰C. Peter Wagner, ed., *Church Growth: State of the Art* (1986), p 23.

After his resignation from the United Christian Missionary Society, McGavran made five major moves which contributed to the expansion of the growth movement;⁴¹

- i. Establishing the Institute of Church Growth on the campus of Northwest Christian College (Eugene, Oregon) in 1961 to expand students' knowledge in growth concepts.
- ii. Publication of Church Growth Bulletin in 1964.
- iii. Relocating the Institute of Church Growth from the campus in Eugene to Fuller Seminary at Pasadena (1965).
- iv. Establishing the William Carey Library (1969) for mass publication and circulation of church growth books.
- v. Creation of the Institute for American Church Growth in 1973 by Dr. McGavran and Dr. Win Arn.

Church growth, from its onset, has received a lot of criticisms but others supported it because the Movement arose at a time when missions work had become liberal, social and welfare-centred, that only sought to better people's lives but was not much interested in making disciples. The 1970s however became a time of discovery, teaching, debate, adaptation, and clarification of church growth principles. There are seven factors that have shaped the Church Growth Movement from this period till date⁴². First, evangelical ecumenicity such as International Congress on World Evangelization in 1974 in Lausanne - Switzerland, and the World Congress on Evangelism, held in Berlin in 1966, gave birth to numerous international congresses on evangelism which brought many evangelical leaders together to discuss and exchange ideas on

⁴¹Elmer Towns, *A Practical Encyclopedia: Evangelism and Church Growth*, p77.

⁴²Delos Miles, *Church Growth: A Mighty River* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1981), 2nd Chapter.

world missions and evangelism. The second factor is that studies were made into the techniques adopted by large and aggressive churches. Principles were then proposed which served as a model for growing churches. Third, the emergence of evangelistic training institutes such as the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and Campus Crusade for Christ gave new insights for spreading the Gospel. People became interested in growing churches and making disciples for Christ. Fourth, church growth emphasized the role of equipping all believers to do the work of ministry. The lay members were equipped and included in the work of the ministry. Fifth, this is the period where Neo-Pentecostalism emerged and had massive impact on church growth. Not only was church growth touched positively by the charismatic movement in mainline denominations, the impact also came from such para-church groups as the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, Women Aglow and the 700 Club. Sixth, Miles also makes a case for the influence of the Sunday school movement on church growth. Southern Baptists were especially noted for church growth, through the Sunday school.

According to Miles, the seventh and final influence that affected church growth in the 1970s, was the Keswick Convention. Keswick Convention is an annual gathering of evangelical Christians in Keswick (the English county of Cumbria). It originated in England in the 1870s and its primary focus is on internal and spiritual growth.

In the late 1980s, there was a rise in commercialization of the gospel, as people saw the church growth principles as a marketing strategy which they could use to expand their churches and make more money. This is what has made many churches today insist on biblical principles rather than artificial methods. But as stated earlier, congregations will grow in ways that God intends if they are healthy; as Schwarz puts it; "Natural church development means bidding farewell to superficial pragmatism, to simplistic cause-and-effect logic, to a fixation with

quantity, to manipulative marketing methods, and to questionable ‘can-do’ attitudes. It means leaving behind human made prescriptions for success and moving on to growth principles which are given by God Himself to all of His creation.”⁴³

3.2 Principles of Healthy Church Growth

According to McGavran and Arn, church growth principle is defined as a universal truth which, when properly interpreted and applied, contributes significantly to the growth of congregations and churches.⁴⁴ These principles are discovered by a process of careful observation of growing churches universally. These principles are usually helpful but however, every principle has exceptions.

In this section, notable books and principles that experts and pastors of church growth have studied to raise healthy churches are introduced. The section identifies effective principles which can cause churches to grow effectively.

3.2.1 Dr. Donald McGavran’s Principles

McGavran is known as the father of church growth. In his book, *Bridges to God*, he emphasizes ministry-centred evangelism, program approach, human-centred movement and discipline, which he derived from his experiences and methods he implemented in his mission in India.

He defines church growth as; “An enterprise devoted to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and to persuading men to become His disciples and dependable members of His church”

⁴³Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development*. 6th ed. St. Charles, IL: Church Smart Resources, 2003.

⁴⁴Donald A. McGavran and Win Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth* (1977), p 15.

McGavran gave four principles of church growth, they are:

i. Homogenous Unit Principle.

A homogeneous unit, or a people group, is defined as “a section of society in which all the members have some characteristics in common; e.g., language, geography, caste or class”⁴⁵.

This principle states that people gather with people of a similar language, culture, and ethnicity. This principle was discovered during McGavran’s attempt to overcome the language, culture, and ethnic barriers of his evangelistic outreach to various groups of people in India. In McGavran’s words, “Humanity is a vast mosaic of tens of thousands of pieces.... Each segment must be won to Christ on its own level. If a segment is invited to join a church composed of people living on a different level, it will reject Christ very largely because the Saviour is obscured by His congregation.... The growth of the church will not be to mould green, white, black, yellow, purple, and red pieces of the mosaic into one dark grey piece. No, the red will remain red, the white will remain white, and the purple will remain purple. But in each of the thousands of ethnic unit societies, the redeemed will multiply”⁴⁶.

Therefore, if a pastor of a local church organizes a church system according to the Homogenous Unit Principle, people can take part in church easily. McGavran maintains that “men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers. Like electricity flowing best where there is good contact, the power of God acts best within a people.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (1980), p 95.

⁴⁶McGavran, *Effective Evangelism* (1988), pp. 111-113, 116.

⁴⁷McGavran, *Bridges of God* (1955), p 94.

ii. People Movement.

The people movement simply means that continuous proclamation of the word of God to people within the same geographical location will have an impact. McGavran understands the term “all nations” in Matt 28:19 as people groups of the same identity, and he points to the simultaneous repentance of three or five thousand people recorded in the book of Acts as the key to the People Movement.⁴⁸

iii. Receptivity Principle

McGavran defines receptive people as a segment of society “friendly to the idea of becoming Christians who are ripen to the Gospel at different times”⁴⁹. It is God’s Grace that opens people’s heart to receive the Gospel. The key is to be at the right place at the right time. He cites examples, such as people who have been conquered by another country, a country having strong nationalism, or a society undergoing a strong transformation of culture tend to have high receptivity. The church can therefore target these groups and send missionaries to reach out and evangelize such groups.

iv. Indigenous Theology.

This means not only to adapt to circumstance and local culture, but also to persist in principles of independence, autonomy, and self. The ecumenical mission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) usually focuses on societal issues, such as human rights, oppression, poverty, and environmental pollution, and is based on liberation theology, but the Church Growth Movement of Fuller Theological Seminary is based on a “Theology of Culture.” The mission principle of

⁴⁸Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 235-259.

⁴⁹Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (1980), p 95.

McGavran is 'Indigenous Theology' harmonizing with the local culture. Ethno Theology, also developed as Local Theology, unites theology and culture. In other words, Ethno Theology, or Indigenous Theology, can be seen to unite theology and cultural anthropology. Charles Craft, who theoretically developed the principles of McGavran, indicated that McGavran depended on theology and cultural anthropology to develop his theory of church growth. He says that western theology has to be applied by Indigenous Theology, which seriously evaluates humanity, culture, and God because Western theology is speculative theology which comes from Greek philosophy.⁵⁰

3.2.2 Peter Wagner's Principles

Peter Wagner was a professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, in Pasadena, California in the year 1971. He graduated with a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary and served as a missionary in Bolivia for sixteen years. He is recognized as a leading authority in the fields of evangelism and spiritual warfare. He received a Doctor of Philosophy in Social Ethics from the University of Southern California in 1977 and from that time, he has written and edited more than forty books.

Wagner points out seven vital signs for growing healthy churches;⁵¹

i. A positive pastor:

A pastor who possesses good leadership characteristics and can motivate the people into action for growth.

⁵⁰Charles Craft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981), p10-11.

⁵¹C. Peter Wagner, *The Healthy Church* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1996), p15.

ii. Well mobilized laity:

The second vital sign for church growth is a well-mobilized laity that has discovered, developed, and is using all their spiritual gifts for growth.

iii. Various services for others

The third vital sign is a church big enough to provide the range of services that meet the expectations of its members. This helps to attract new members.

iv. Cell groups

Wagner divides the church in three groups;

- Membership: This is the largest group and can be of any size.
- Fellowship: This group should contain about thirty-five to eighty members.
- Kingship: This group is limited to eight to twelve persons.

A balance between the relationships of these three groups will help grow the church.

v. Homogeneous groups

Growing churches normally find that their members come basically from one kind of people, or a so-called homogeneous unit. This unit can be identified and targeted to grow a church.

vi. Making disciples

Churches which are able to develop an effective evangelistic and discipleship methods are able to grow.

- vii. Biblical priorities.

Priorities properly arranged in biblical order constitute the seventh vital sign of a healthy church.

3.2.3 Elmer Towns' principles

Elmer Towns is a product of Fuller Theological Seminary, a distinguished professor of Church Growth at Liberty Baptist Theological seminary, and a friend of Peter Wagner. He is an author and editor of popular and scholarly works, a seminar lecturer, and the creator of over twenty resource packages for leadership education. He has influenced the modern Church Growth Movement throughout the world.

Towns highlight seven principles for healthy church growth.⁵²

- i.* External or quantitative growth which deals with attendance, memberships, offerings, baptisms, enrolment, and numerical growth. This involves organization, which means structure, rational growth, outer to inner leadership management of people and marketing.
- ii.* Internal or qualitative growth brings average Christians to active commitment to God. This is a spiritual factor of growth in grace, the Word, conformity to Christ, attitude, etc. This could be called organic growth, which means life, feeling growth from inner to outer Spirit-directed sensitive ministry.
- iii.* Biological growth occurs as church members have babies, the children swelling the attendance figures of the church.

⁵²Elmer L. Towns, *A Practical Encyclopedia: Evangelism and Church Growth*, 80-81.

- iv. Conversion growth is the only kind of growth by which the Good News of Salvation can spread to all nations, society and to the outermost parts of the earth.
- v. Transfer growth is a common factor of today's church. It occurs when members transfer from one church to join another church.
- vi. Expansion growth occurs when a church gains non-Christian converts and takes more of them, as well as transfer members. This growth begins another church like them.
- vii. Extension growth. This means a church begins a new ministry. It is called a "branch" or "sister church" within the same general homogeneous group.

3.2.4 Christian A. Schwarz's principles

Christian A. Schwarz is a German church growth consultant who has been working among German churches for a number of years. His books on the theory and practice of church growth have been published in 34 countries. From 1994-1996, Schwarz turned his attention toward the international church and subsequently initiated and supervised what may be the most comprehensive research on church growth ever conducted. More than 1000 churches in 32 countries on all six continents took part in his study. In the end, nearly 4.2 million responses were analysed. Schwarz has published several materials such as the *Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development*, *The ABCs of Natural Church Development*, *Paradigm Shift in the Church*, and the *Natural Church Development Survey*. Schwarz studied Theology in Bochum, Bethel, Wuppertal and Mainz, Germany, and in Pasadena, California.

Schwarz investigated several factors that make churches grow. He explained that Jesus used an analogy from farming to explain the manner in which the kingdom of God grows (Mark 4:26-29). Once the farmer plants the seed, it grows by itself. Although fruit comes through the miracle

created within the seed, the farmer has to work hard to prepare the ground for productivity. What is it then that makes churches grow? In *Natural Church Development*, Schwarz helps answer this question based on research from more than 1,000 churches in 32 countries. He identified eight characteristics that enable a church to grow. All eight must exist for a church to have healthy growth:⁵³

- Empowering Leadership

Empowering leadership provides nurturing for Christians to attain their spiritual potentials. Pastors focus on discipleship, delegation and relationships to empower members to attain their spiritual goals. Lay members are not helpers to simply promote the pastor's goals, but rather they collectively establish goals for the church. Greatness in leadership comes through a genuine heart of service (Matthew 23: 11-12).

- Gift-Oriented Ministry.

The role of church leadership is to assist its members in the identification of their gifts and to integrate them into appropriate ministries. This is vital since over 80% of over 1600 believers questioned could not identify their spiritual gifts. Of all the variables extracted from this part of his study, Schwarz sees that the most effective churches are those who provide lay-training for their staff, helping them to minister within the realm of their gifting. What undergirds this principle is Schwarz's conviction that God has already determined the gifting of each church member and has a place for each member in the body of Christ. Thus, the pastor seeks to place the appropriately gifted person in the proper ministry position.

⁵³http://www.ourvineyard.org/files/A_Review_of_Christian_Schwarz1.htm

- Passionate Spirituality.

Healthy churches are passionate about their walk with Jesus—living committed lives and practising their faith with joy and enthusiasm. Passionate spirituality comes from every believer realizing his or her place in Christ and the body, accepting responsibility to pray and reach the lost with the compassion of the Lord. Interestingly, Schwarz confirms the notion that individuals walking in spiritual passion also demonstrated great enthusiasm for their particular congregations. He also notes that congregants from healthy, growing churches experience prayer as an inspiring experience.

- Functional Structures

The strength of every organization is highly dependent on the design of the structure. Functional structures provide order so productivity can thrive. Ease of communication and chain of command are all dependent on the structure of the organisation. Adjustments are made as needed so everyone can function effectively to do the right things (1 Corinthians 14:33). Pastors focus on the continuous need to balance tradition with the need for change to enable beneficial growth. Department heads are appointed to coordinate each area of ministry so that groups function well. Each leader develops more leaders.

- Inspiring Worship

Inspiring worship services exalt Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Corporate worship nourishes the body of Christ, the church members (Ephesians 4: 11-16). It is not driven by a particular style or ministry focus group, but rather, the shared experience of God's awesome presence. The word 'inspiring' means inspiration which comes from the Spirit of God. When the Holy Spirit is

present during worship service, the service becomes enjoyable, not laborious or done out of legalistic requirements. An appropriate setting for the service frees members to worship their King. A friendly welcoming team greets members of the body, a competent worship leader facilitates collective worship.

- Holistic Small Groups

Schwarz states, “If we were to identify any one principle as the most important, then without doubt it would be the multiplication of small groups. They must be holistic small groups which go beyond just discussing Bible passages to applying its message to daily life.”⁵⁴ The vision to see these small groups reproduce, characterizes the healthiest of churches surveyed. Indeed, 78% of growing churches consciously promotes the multiplication of small groups through cell division. The great majority of growing churches also indicated that it was more important for members to be involved in a small group than attend church.

- Need-Oriented Evangelism

As times and culture change, methods of evangelism also needs to change. The message does not change, simply the way we communicate that message. Many of the methods used in the past are less effective now. Evangelism today, is most effectively accomplished through relationships and meeting the needs of people. It is the task of every Christian to use his or her gifts to serve non-Christians with whom one has a personal relationship, to see to it that they hear the gospel, and to encourage contact with the local church. The key to church growth is for the local congregation to focus its evangelistic efforts on the questions and needs of non-Christians.

⁵⁴Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development*. St. Charles, IL: (Church Smart Resources, 2000), 32.

- Loving relationships

Loving relationships are the heart of a healthy, growing church. Jesus said people will know we are His disciples by our love (John 13:35). Practical demonstration of love builds authentic Christian communities and brings others into God's kingdom. Friendships are developed and maintained through commitment of time, talents and emotion. True, unfeigned love fills their time together, even during times of hardship. Joyful laughter highlights those churches alive in Jesus.

Schwarz concludes that interplay of all eight characteristics is vital if growth is to occur. Where all eight were at least at a 65 per cent level, that church grew. This goal, although difficult, is attainable by focusing on qualitative growth within the present membership, leaving quantitative growth to God (1 Corinthians 3:6).

3.2.5 Rick Warren's Principles

Rick Warren launched a local church in April, 1980 in Saddleback Valley, CA. At that time he wanted to start a new church that is different from the existing church. He was concerned about non-churched people, so he decided to start a church for them. That church is Today's Saddleback Church. Rick Warren is recognized as a pastor influencing the most people presently, and his church is one of the biggest mega churches in America. In his books, *The Purpose Driven Church* and *The Purpose Driven Life*, he gives five mission statements for the church by using the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). He defined them as the following: "A Great Commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission will grow a Great Church." These five missions are the same

principles of church growth of Saddleback church, but the success of the principles made them evolve into a worldwide accepted principle and they are as follows:⁵⁵

i. Worship.

Worshiping God is the most important purpose of the church and believers. Rick Warren created the worship for seekers and worship-centred seekers. A Seeker means a provisional, reserve believer who does not believe in Jesus Christ at present, but who will believe in Jesus Christ in the future, so worship must be prepared to accommodate seekers easily and to control the flow, order, and speed of worship. Most of all, Warren emphasizes the need to preach good sermon and music ministration in worship. The reason is because the sermon is the strongest tool which preaches Jesus Christ directly. Therefore, he preaches a sermon to apply the Word of God in the hearer's life, and he makes hearing the sermon easy by presenting sermon notes. Music is one of the strongest tools that makes all nations one. Saddleback Church formed a music band, and everybody learns and sings the music to serve seekers.

ii. Fellowship.

Christians are formed for God's family: "Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19, KJV). The unity of the church has to transfer from the pastor to the saints. If a church has healthy small groups, it will have healthy fellowship and have a synergistic effect of growth and maturity on the church. Experts of church growth usually state that unless new comers have a special relationship with at least six persons within six months,

⁵⁵Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), pp36-46.

they will leave the church.⁵⁶ Therefore, through the small groups of a church, existing and new believers must connect with each other to build a healthy church.

iii. Discipleship.

People were created to become like Christ: “Teach them to observe all that I commanded you” (Matt. 28:20, KJV). Warren created strategies that develop a seeker to become a church attendee, a church attendee to become a church member, and church member to minister. He called it the diamond strategy and made four classes, such as the 101, 201, 301, and 401 classes. He called it “Purpose Driven Training” and published manuals and teaching materials for the world. His concerns and questions are as follows: How can we make church members to live a purpose driven life? How can we train church members? He thinks that if making disciples is God’s command, we cannot equip ministers without training. Saddleback Church has a required curriculum to attend as a training course. It is the “new comer class” (101 Class), in which church members and new comers learn the church’s vision. When a new comer finishes the 101 Class, they have to submit a membership covenant for church members. This covenant is to announce officially the duty as a church member and to confess one’s faith in front of church members. People think of signing a document as important, thus new comers have a sense of belonging and self-confidence as a member of Saddleback Church.

iv. Ministry.

People were put on earth to make a contribution: “Love your neighbours as yourself” (Matt. 22:39, KJV). Ministry is another method of expressing the love of God. Warren questioned the ways in which a church can serve its community? This question raised a variety of ministries and

⁵⁶Sung Hun Myung, *New-Comer School* (Seoul: Institute for Church Growth, 1999), p29.

ministers for Saddleback Church whose aim was to reach out and provide services to the community. These services include food and shelter for the homeless, and donations to orphans and the less-privileged people in the society. Saddleback Church teaches church members to have a positive influence the community because they believe another method of evangelism is service and good work as a Christian. Saddleback Church is interested in community ministry rather than a ministry-centred church. If a local church does not serve community, church cannot become the light and salt of the world (Matt.5:13-16).

v. Evangelism.

The church was made for a mission: “Go and make disciples” (Matt. 28:19). The biggest difference between Saddleback Church and other churches is evangelism. Saddleback Church has been emphasizing evangelism since the time when it was launched. Church members of Saddleback believe that the most important mission is to rescue the lost.

Rick Warren states that the salvation that God desires has to follow God’s method, which is the Word of God. Saddleback Church divided the areas of evangelism by analysing community thoroughly, such as circumstance, age, salary, education, and religion. As a result, Saddleback Church shared the ten most receptive groups as follows:

- i. Second-time visitors to the church,
- ii. Close friends and relatives of new converts,
- iii. People going through divorce,
- iv. Those who feel their need for a recovery program (from alcohol, drugs, sexual abuse, and so forth),
- v. First-time parents,

- vi. The terminally ill and their families,
- vii. Couples with major marital problems,
- viii. Parents with problem children,
- ix. Recently unemployed or those with major financial problems, and
- x. New residents in the community.

3.2.6 Dag Heward-Mills' Principles

Dag Heward-Mills talks about fourteen principles of growth in his book, *The Mega Church*⁵⁷.

Some of these principles include:

- i. The principle of the multiplied senior pastor.

This involves training other church members who are not necessarily pastors, to act as pastors within the church. This, he believes, allows more people to work and so increases the amount of pastoral work done within the church.

- ii. Principle of maximised Sunday usage

This principle involves using Sunday to its fullest. He has found it effective because traditionally in Ghana, people have dedicated Sunday to both resting and going to church. All pastors and shepherd in the church carry out various activities including visitation, prayer, counselling and interaction.

⁵⁷Dag Heward-Mills, *The Mega Church*, Parchment House, 2011

iii. Principle of smaller sub-divisions.

These smaller groups allow everyone an opportunity to get involved in serving God. It also lets the pastor know all the church members, so the members feel more a part of the church. It breaks the idea of the members just being numbers and statistics so far as the pastor is concerned.

iv. The principle of the person-x oriented church.

A person-x is the new convert, the new member or the visitor. Dag draws out a plan which he calls the Deep Sea Fishing, during which all old church members are supposed to move through the church and interact with anyone and everyone that they do not know. It helps foster friendships and keeps people in church.

v. The principle of multiple services

This allows a pastor to have customised services for any group of people, based on factors like suitable times and language constraints. In cases where church membership outgrows seating capacity, multiple services are also encouraged to ease the congestion in the church halls.

In his book, *Church Growth...it is possible!*⁵⁸, Dag Heward-Mills also strongly recommends principles like copying, hard work, hard leadership, unity, building relationships, having conventions, effective data management, wise financial management and a burning vision, as effective principles in growing a big church.

⁵⁸Dag Heward-Mills, *Church Growth...It is possible!*, Parchment House, 2011

3.3 Conclusion

Church growth is an act of God. However, a careful investigation and application of proven principle can help grow a church in ways God intends. The next chapter takes the Natural Church Development approach and see how it plays out in a growing church like LCI.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is the assessment of the health of LCI based on the eight characteristics of healthy growing. It shows the vision, mission and structure of LCI as well as its health which is a major contributor to its growth.

4.2 Brief History of LCI

LCI was founded in 1988 by Bishop Dag Heward-Mills who had a passion to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ to the lost souls of the world.⁵⁹ Bishop Dag, who is a medical doctor by profession, started a branch of a music and drama group called Calvary Road Incorporated (CRI) after he gained admission into the University of Ghana Medical School in 1982. It was during that same year that he met Sister Adelaide Baiden, who later became his wife. CRI attracted both the curious and those hungry for the Lord, including Brothers E.A.T Sackey and Eddy Addy. The three Brothers continued working assiduously to share the gospel, in addition to studying. In September of the same year, ‘Brother’ Dag was transferred to Korle-Bu with the rest of the MB III Class of the Medical School. ‘Brother’ Dag, as he was called then, began preaching at dawn and won many souls for Christ. It was during this time that he decided to heed to the leading of the Holy Spirit to leave CRI and begin a church. He started conducting meetings in lecture halls. The church came under attack and persecution from Medical Students who claimed that their worship was a nuisance to them.

⁵⁹Retrieved from Wikipedia website: http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/lighthouse_chapel_international.

In 1987, in the early hours of the New Year at Mensah Sarbah Hall, Legon, Dag decided to obey God and become a Pastor. He informed Sackey of this final decision to take up the role of pastoring the remnants of Korle-Bu Christian Centre (KCC). Following this decision, CRI Headquarters officially dissociated themselves from Dag and KCC. Dag announced to the fellowship that he was now their pastor much to the dissatisfaction of some of the leadership who therefore became disloyal to his cause. In the same month, Pastor Dag decided to change the name of KCC to 'The Lighthouse' because he believed that the vision of the Lighthouse extended beyond the suburb of Korle-Bu. The church expanded even amidst intense disloyalty and members spilled onto the upstairs corridor of the School of Hygiene. It was while rigorously building a church and winning souls for Christ, that Pastor Dag completed his medical studies on 10th March, 1989 and qualified as a Medical Doctor. About a month later, on April 1, he started work as a House Officer, based at the Paediatric Surgical Department. He followed this milestone with the blessing of his marriage to Sister Adelaide Baiden on June 8th 1989. Pastor Sackey had the immense pleasure and honour of officiating at the ceremony between Pastor and Sister Adelaide, at the Trinity College, Accra Ghana.

Pastor Dag later rendered an apology to the leaders of CRI for the error he committed towards them at the inception of The Lighthouse Chapel and in the spirit of love, the CRI leadership assured him of their forgiveness and a restoration of relationship. With the vision of reaching the lost beyond Korle-Bu still in focus, Pastor Dag changed the church's name from The Lighthouse Chapel to The Lighthouse Chapel International on 23rd December, 1989. Today, the intense passion for soul winning has fuelled the ministry of Bishop Dag Heward-Mills. LCI, which he founded has grown beyond its initial location, Korle-Bu and has more than 1550 branches in 66 countries world-wide. The young man in whom the Lord placed a compelling desire for soul-

winning is a pastor of thousands with his headquarters at the Qodesh - one of the largest, ultra-modern complexes in Africa.

4.2.1 Vision of LCI

- To build 25,000 churches.
- To have Churches in 150 countries.
- To fight fiercely and relentlessly in all battles for the advancement of the churches and the Gospel.
- To produce radical Christians who work for God.
- To go to heaven and to hear Jesus say - "Well done, good and faithful servant"

4.2.2 Church Structure

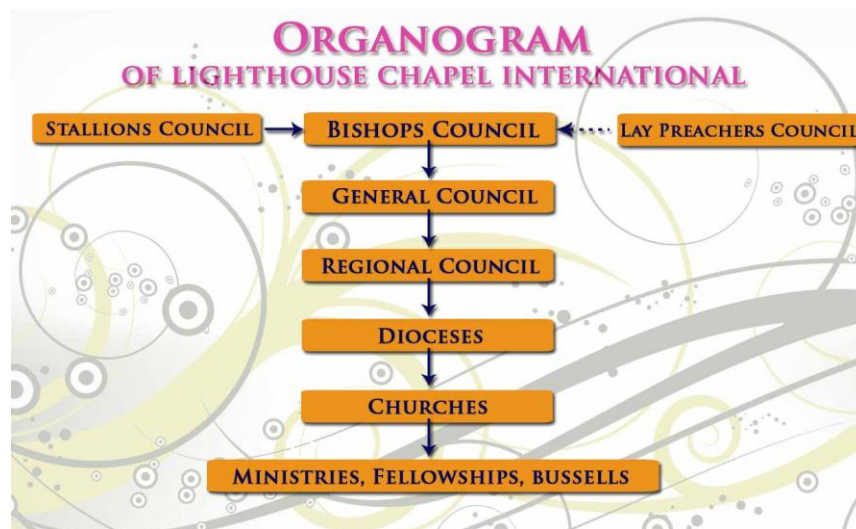


Figure 1 LCI Church Structure

(<http://www.lighthousechapel.org/lci2/index.php/leadership/lci-church-structure>)

4.3 Methodology

This survey was conducted by administering likert-type questionnaires based on the eight characteristics to the Senior Pastor and 30 other people who meet the following criteria;

- i. Committed to church
- ii. Actively involved in ministry work, and
- iii. Member of a cell/home group

The average was calculated on the responses to determine the overall percentage. The objective was to determine whether LCI Qodesh and LCI True Vine Cathedral would score an average of 50% or more.

4.3.1 Data collection, Instrument and Procedure

Primary data was collected using questionnaires. Again, some of the comments are from observation of the way services are conducted in the two cathedrals. Interviews were also carried out with some church members after church. All questions that were used can be referenced in appendix. The following discussions capture the interpretation of the results obtained from the data collection.

4.3.1.1 Instrument and Procedure

The Natural Church Development Framework was employed as the instrument used to test the health of LCI

a. Natural Church Development (NCD) Approach

NCD provides a shift in the thinking about church growth. The suggestion is that Growth should be about quality (health) and not just quantity (numbers), and that quality should take priority over quantity when thinking about Church Growth. At the heart of this paradigm is the Scriptural picture of the church as a living organism, not just an organization (albeit a spiritual one). Looking at the church "organically" gives us a different perspective on what "growth" means. The growth of organisms focus on their health, their capacity to reproduce, and how the individual 'body' parts interact. They are grown, not built. They are nurtured, not assembled. Therefore if a church becomes increasingly healthy over time, it is more likely and better able to reproduce disciples, ministries and eventually itself.

The Institute for Natural Church Development International, based in Germany under the leadership of Christian A. Schwarz, undertook worldwide research in the early 1990s. This is perhaps the most extensive study ever conducted on church growth.⁶⁰

The key question was: "What church growth principles are true, regardless of culture and theological persuasion?" The study involved 1000 different churches in 32 countries on five continents from 18 different languages; and 4.2 million pieces of data were analysed. The study included both large and small, growing and declining churches. It covered churches persecuted by the state, churches financially supported by the state, well-known churches, totally unknown churches and churches from areas currently experiencing great spiritual revivals, as well as from regions which appear to be more spiritually developing

⁶⁰<http://www.lifeandleadership.com/book-summaries/schwarz-natural-church-development.html>

As at the end of June 2009, over 60,000 surveys had been completed worldwide, confirming the reliability and accuracy of the original research and that there are indeed universal God-given principles that can be applied to the unique issues in every local church.

It was discovered that healthy growing churches have eight common characteristics. These are;

- Empowering Leadership
- Functional Structures
- Gift-Oriented Ministry
- Holistic Small Groups
- Inspiring Worship
- Loving Relationships
- Need-Oriented Evangelism
- Passionate Spirituality⁶¹

Christian Schwarz notes that a healthy church scores an average of over 50% in the eight qualities of the Normalization test.⁶² The NCD framework was developed after the research to help test the health of churches, to identify strengths and weak areas which needs improvement.

⁶¹Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 39.

⁶²The NCD process of testing is to administer special questionnaires based on the eight characteristics to the senior Pastor and 30 other people who meet the following criteria; i. Committed to church , ii Actively involved in ministry work, and iii Member of a cell/home group The questionnaire is prepared in the likert-form, and an average is calculated on the responses to determine the overall percentage. A church which scores 50% and above is classified as a healthy church.

4.4 Evaluation of LCI Based On the Eight Qualities of Healthy Growing Churches.

4.4.1. LCI-QODESH

The Qodesh is the headquarters of the Lighthouse Chapel International worldwide. It is located at North Kaneshie in Accra, Ghana. The Senior Pastor at the Qodesh at the time of the research in July 2014 was Bishop E.A.T Sackey.⁶³ At the Qodesh, there are services for adults and all ages of young people. They also have services in the English language, French, and Twi. Apart from Sunday services, there are a number of other meetings throughout the week which include home cell Bible study meetings called Bussells. The average attendance for the first service is 790 persons, second service sits an average of 1680 and the third service is about 1830. The French and Twi services have average attendance of 580 and 220 respectively. The attendance for the youth and children's church are as follows; Youth church – 730, Junior church – 700, Kids church – 379, Infant church 1 – 170, Infant church 2 - 87

After the test in all the eight areas, LCI-Qodesh had a total average score of 67.1% which is a sign of a healthy church. However, there needs to be improvements in certain areas as discussed in 4.4.1.3

⁶³Bishop Sackey is soon to be replaced by Bishop Eddy Fabin and Bishop Oko Bortei-Doku.

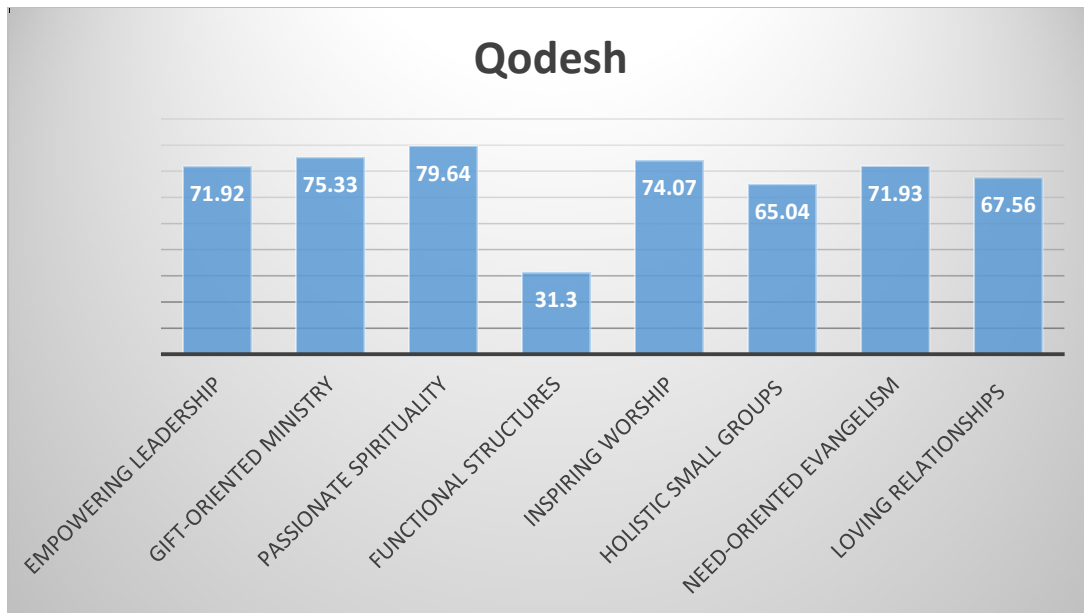


Figure 2 Overall Test Score of LCI-Qodesh

Figure 2 shows the average test score of each of the eight characteristics of a healthy church. After combining these individual scores, an average of 67.1% was determined which represents the overall score that determines the health of the church.

4.4.1.2 LCI-True Vine Cathedral

The True Vine Cathedral (TVC) is one of the most vibrant branches of LCI located at Bantama - Kumasi. The Head Pastor of TVC is Bishop Patrick Bruce. There are three Sunday services every week. The first and third services are English with an average attendance of 80 and 250 respectively. The second service which is a Twi service has an average attendance of 220 persons. The junior services have an average attendance of 150 children.

After the test in all eight areas, TVC scored a total average of 65.28% which is also a clear sign of a healthy church.

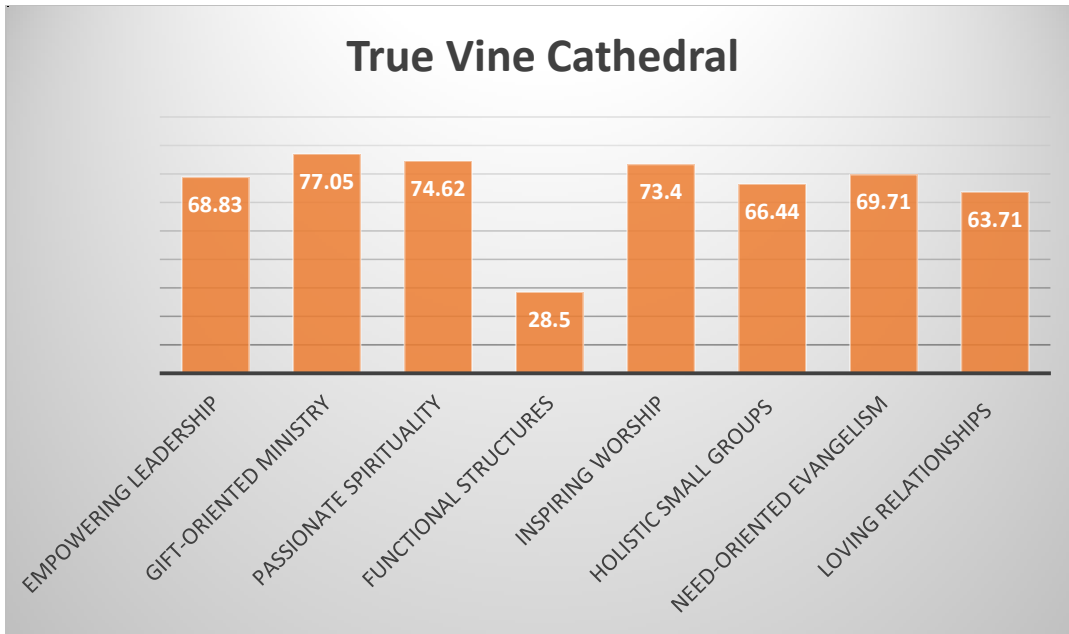


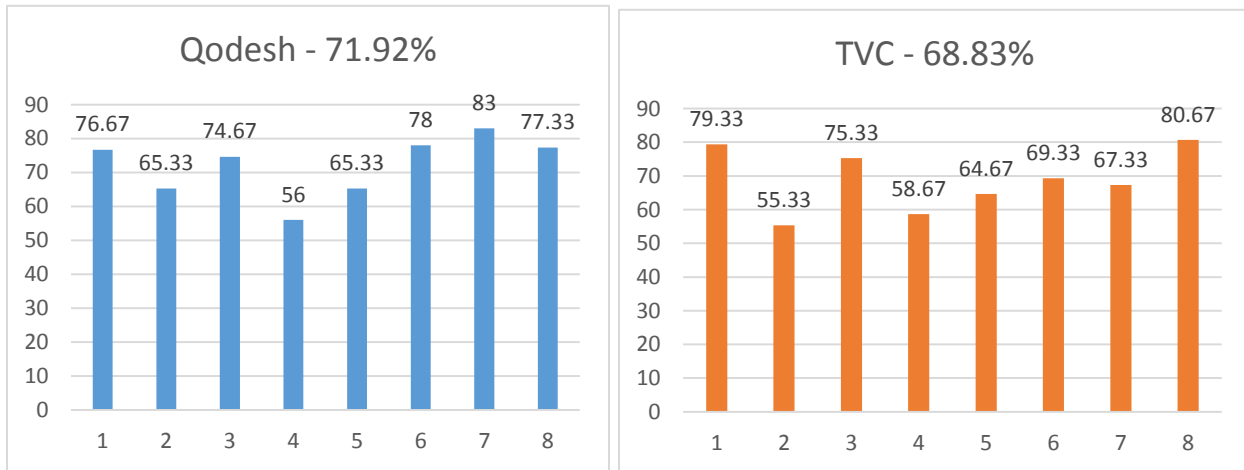
Figure 3 Overall Test Score of LCI-TVC

4.4.1.3 Analysis of LCI and TVC based on the eight quality characteristics

a) Empowering Leadership

Good Church Leaders do not use their congregants as ‘helpers’ to attain their own goals. They rather assist others to achieve their potentials in God. Their main duty is to equip, support, motivate, and mentor individuals, enabling them to become all that God wants them to be.

Figure 4 Test Scores for Empowering Leadership



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The leader’s inspiring optimism.</i> 2. <i>The leader doesn’t delegate.</i> 3. <i>The leader’s concentration on the task</i> 4. <i>The pastor seeks help from lay people</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>The leaders evade conflicts.</i> 6. <i>The pastor has too much work to do.</i> 7. <i>Members help organize church service</i> 8. <i>The pastor feels at home in church</i> |
|---|---|

In Figure 4, we find that Qodesh scored 71.92% which is a good score, but it seems that the pastor does not seek help from lay people in areas where he is not gifted. The Pastor, as gifted as he is, cannot do everything by himself, and therefore there should be a coordination between clergy and laity in carrying out church tasks. This will empower the laity to employ their talents for the benefit of the church making them develop their capabilities. TVC can also adopt the same strategy because the figure reveals the pastor’s inability to delegate tasks. Delegation frees the Pastor from dealing with trivial issues and helps him focus on the vision of the Church.

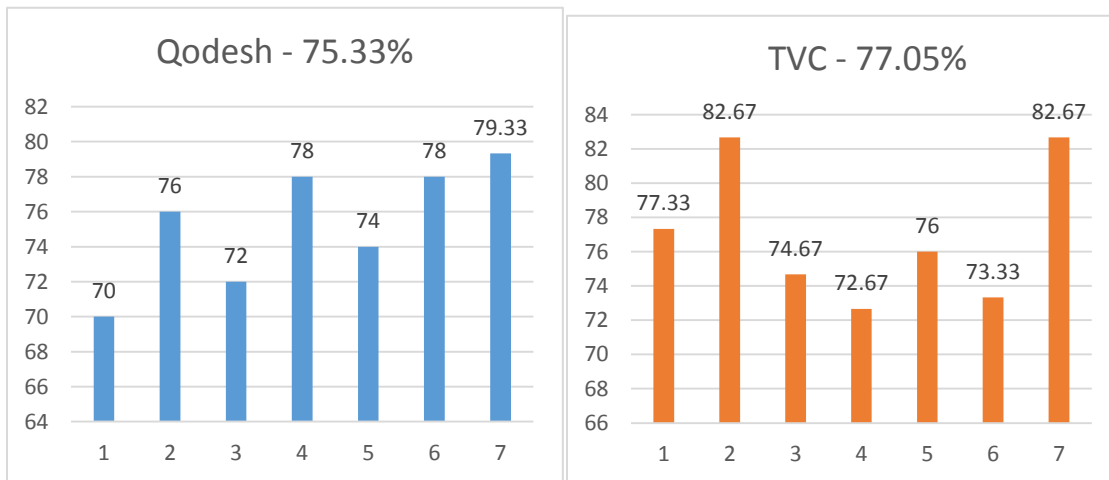
Most growing churches across the globe have good team work. Without an effective team, both Qodesh and TVC will not be able to adapt to the changing needs of the people that they are trying to reach. The body of Christ functions as a team ministry (Rom. 12:4-5; Cor. 12:14-27). Team ministry is biblical. Jesus Christ was found traveling with His disciples doing evangelism

and mission works throughout His public ministry. Jesus did not do ministry alone. The ministry of the early church became effective because of Team ministry. Paul ministered as part of an apostolic band, or ministry team. When he established new churches, it was clear that God intended them to act as an effective ministry team. Paul realized that some things should be delegated to others in order for him to focus on those things he could do best. Team work is therefore essential in the building of healthy church.

(b) Gift-Oriented Ministry

Gift oriented ministry is about helping congregants to identify and employ their gifts and talents for the service of the church. This brings satisfaction to the members and makes them feel useful in the house of God.

Figure 5 Test Scores for Gift-Oriented Ministry



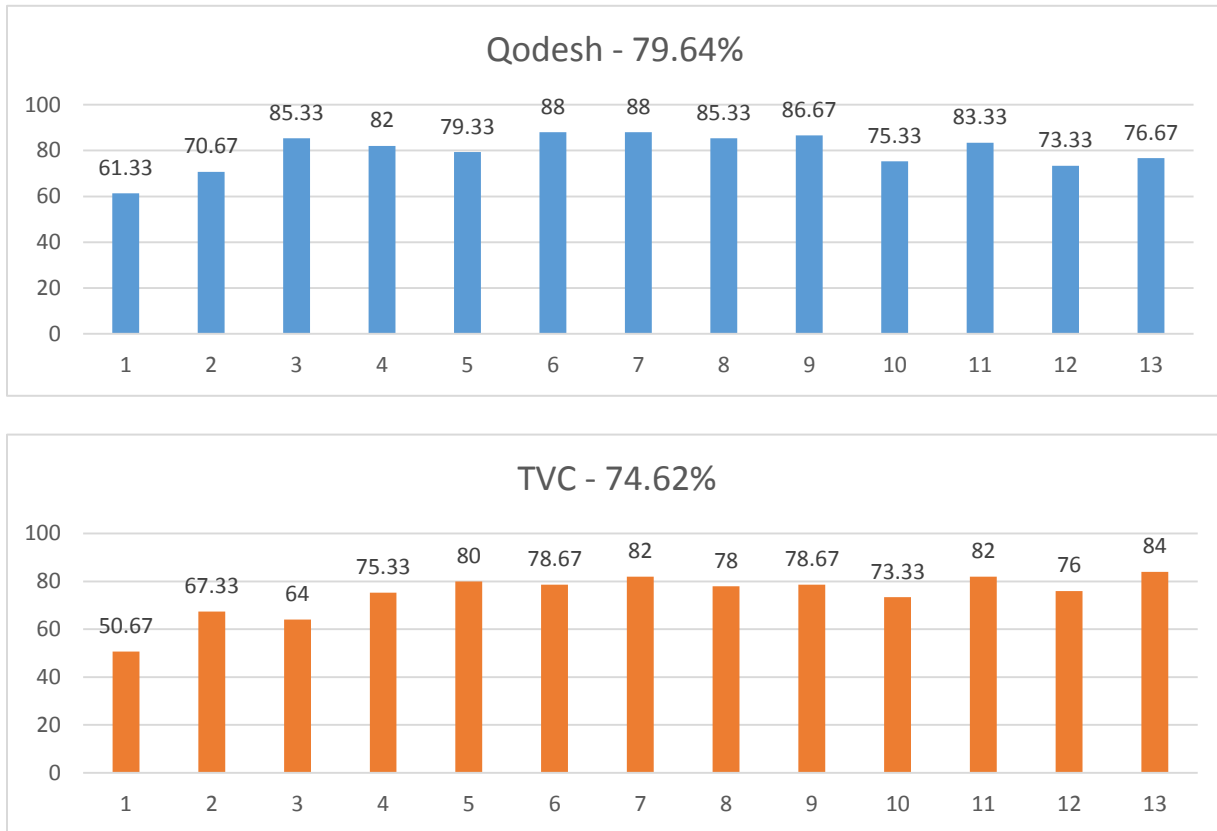
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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>I know my spiritual gifts.</i> 2. <i>I enjoy my tasks at church fellowship.</i> 3. <i>My church supports me in my ministry</i> 4. <i>My work contributes to building the church</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>My tasks are in accordance with my gifts</i> 6. <i>I enjoy my task in the church</i> 7. <i>My work is valuable to the church.</i> |
|--|---|

The survey revealed that in Qodesh, many people do not know their spiritual gifts and are supported in their ministry. A low percentage of respondents in TVC agree that their gifts contribute to the building of the church. A spiritual gift is a divine enablement for ministry to the body of Christ. Paul writes, “To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good . . . One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:7, 11, KJV). As each part of the human body has a particular function, so does each member of the body of Christ (cf. 12:14). If members do not discover and use their spiritual gifts, a church cannot expect great progress in any area of church development.

(c) Passionate Spirituality

Passionate spirituality is about identifying whether the church is on fire or not. The aim is to know how passionate the congregations were about their faith and how willing were they to share their faith with others.

Figure 6 Test Scores for Passionate Spirituality



1. I support Church financially.

2. Church members pray for me regularly

3. I read the Bible on my own

4. My faith influences my life.

5. I am enthusiastic about my church

6. The word of God influences my decisions

7. I thank God for His work in my life

8. Our pastor is a spiritual example

9. I'm optimistic about the future

10. I share my experience with other Christians

11. I enjoy my life

12. People are motivated to do church work.

13. Prayer is an inspiring experience for me.

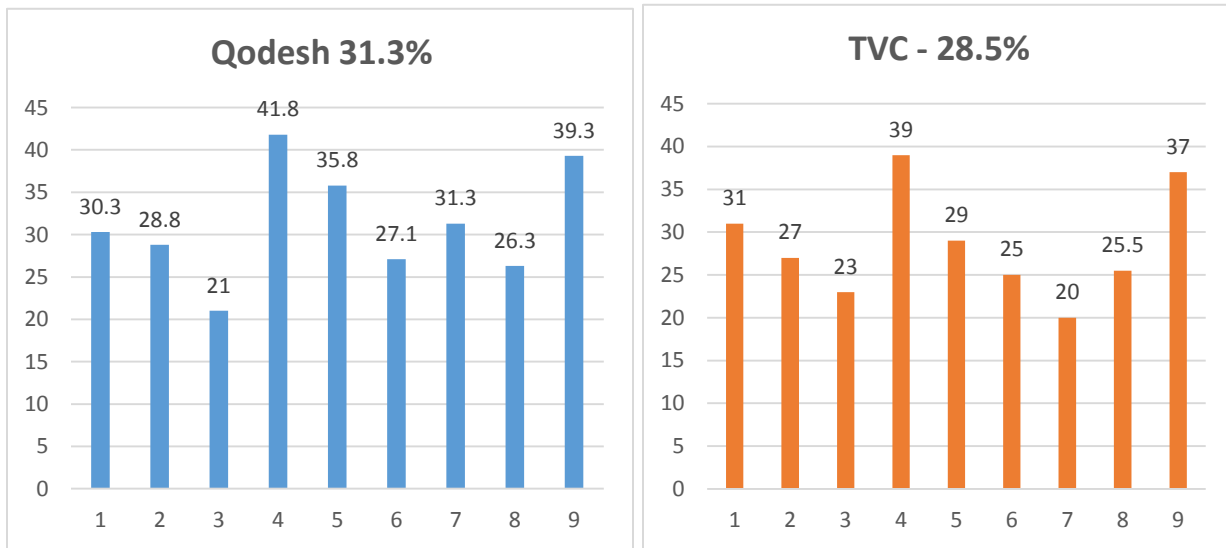
The results from the questionnaire reveals that Qodesh and TVC scored 79.64% and 74.62 respectively on passionate spirituality. A closer look at the result demonstrates that the passionate spirituality is related to Gift-oriented ministry, and therefore we find, that because the members have not yet discovered their gifts, they do not serve the church according to their gifts,

they merely do what they are requested to do by reason of their position. When a church operates this way, growth in passionate spirituality is limited.

(d) Functional Structures

Leaders are not simply to lead, but also to develop other leaders. A good leader tries to evaluate the extent to which structures improve the performance of the church or organization.

Figure 7 Test Scores for Functional Structures



1. *I am informed about church plan*
2. *I know future goals of our church*
3. *The church structure promotes church life*
4. *The Church plans and organize activities*
5. *In our church we often try new things*

6. *I know the church organizational structure*
7. *Frequent training of lay people.*
8. *I consider our church to be less traditional*
9. *There is a leader for each ministry.*

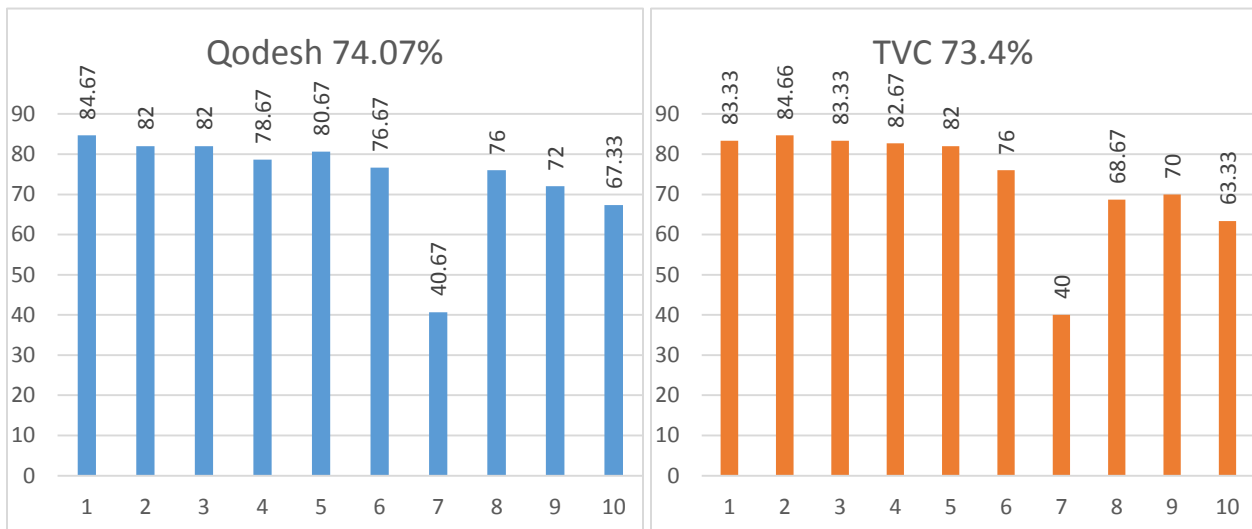
From figure 7, both Qodesh and TVC had their lowest score when tested in the area of functional structure. It appears that the church is less traditional and the church structure does not promote

church life. This church is systematic and not flexible, LCI needs to be able to conveniently change its administration and systems to suit different situations and circumstances.

(e) Inspiring Worship

The word “inspiring” deserves clarification. It is to be understood in the literal sense of inspiration from the Spirit of God. Whenever the Holy Spirit is truly at work (and His presence is not merely presumed), He will have a concrete effect upon the way a worship service is conducted including the entire atmosphere of a gathering. When worship is inspiring, it draws people to the church services “all by itself.”

Figure 8 Test Scores for Inspiring Worship



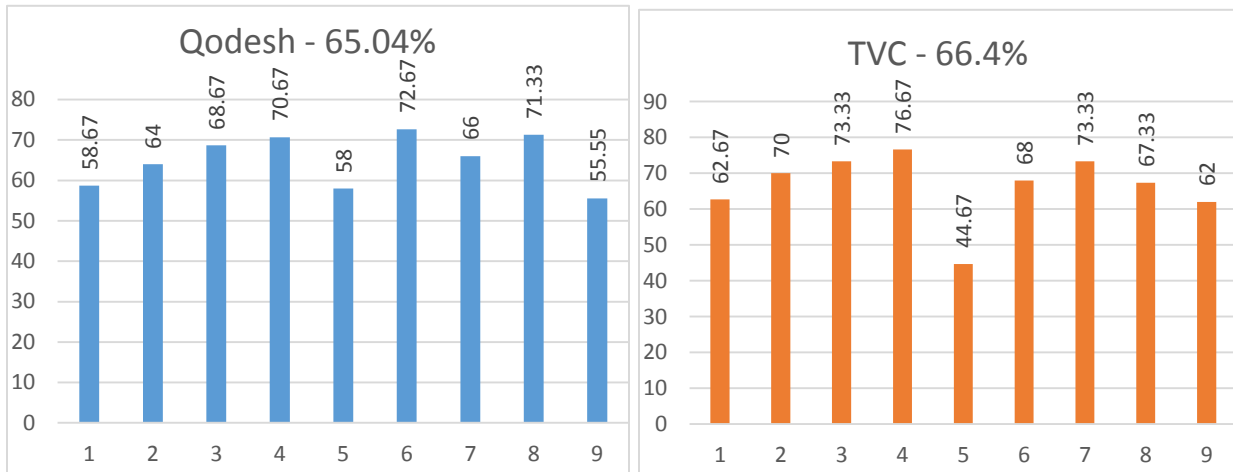
- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The worship service is inspiring</i> 2. <i>I enjoy the sermons</i> 3. <i>The service has a positive influence on me</i> 4. <i>The sermon addresses my needs.</i> 5. <i>The music is inspiring.</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. <i>Optimal care is given to our children</i> 7. <i>Worship service is boring.</i> 8. <i>I attend church service as a duty.</i> 9. <i>I bring visitors to church services.</i> 10. <i>New faces are a rare in Service.</i> |
|--|--|

Worship is one of the most important factors in the principles of church growth. Jesus says in John 4:23-24, "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." It is through inspiring worship that the church experiences and has encounters with God. If a senior pastor emphasizes the importance of worship, church members will also see that worship is important and prepare to do their best. The scores for both churches reveal that worship services are not boring. However a lot of the church members attend service as a duty. Also, members should be encouraged to bring more visitors to church and optimal care should be given to the children service.

(f) Holistic Small groups

If small groups are to have a positive effect on both quality and numerical growth within a church, they must be holistic groups which go beyond just discussing Bible passages, but applying its message to daily life. In these groups, members are able to bring up those issues and questions that are of immediate personal concerns. Much of the essence of true church life is worked out in small groups.

Figure 9 Test Scores for Holistic Small Groups



1. *Personal problems are shared in my group.*
2. *My group intercedes for me*
3. *Spiritual issues are discussed in my group.*
4. *I feel at home in my group.*
5. *My group does irrelevant things.*

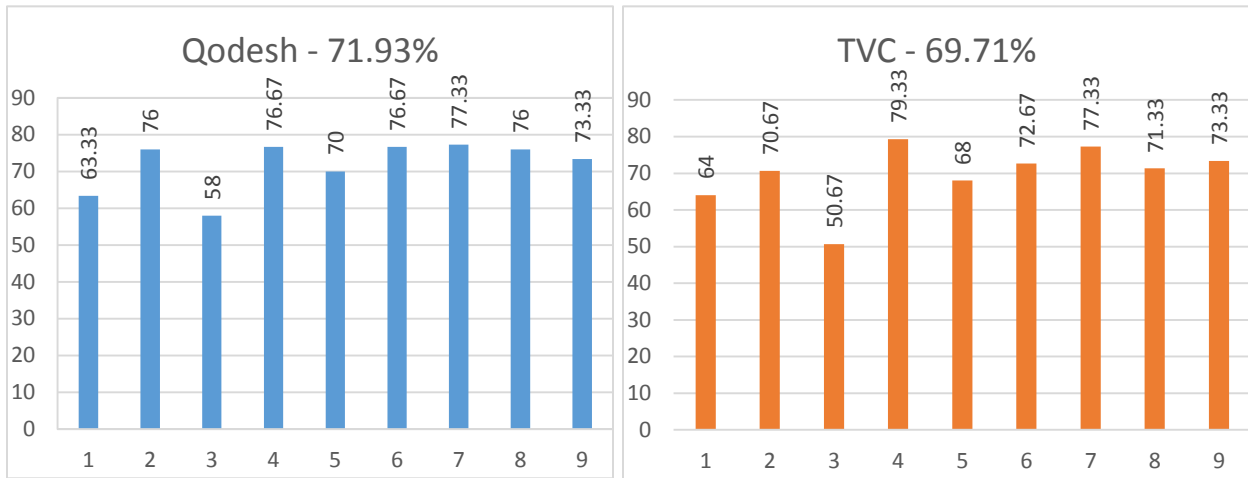
6. *We trust each other in my group*
7. *I like my small group.*
8. *Newcomers are integrated easily.*
9. *New groups emerge from my group*

Loneliness and isolation is one of the main challenges facing modern societies. People need to have groups within which they can feel a sense of belonging. It is in this groups that members can share their experiences and discuss their problems for others to intercede for them. The ability for a group to integrate new comers for expansion is a skill which requires the training of the leaders. A closer look at the scores for both churches demonstrates that members look forward to attending the cell meetings. They feel at home in their cell groups, they are open in cell meetings, and have no difficulty in sharing their trouble, worries, and private prayer requests. New comers also can come to the meeting and can get along well with the existing members. However, they admitted that many of the things discussed in cell meetings are quite irrelevant. This suggests that cell meetings need to be planned and structured in a way that will be relevant to its members.

(g) Need-Oriented Evangelism

Christians are commissioned to reach out to the world with the Gospel of Christ. It is the task of each Christian to use his or her gifts to serve non-Christians and by so doing preach the Gospel to them while encouraging them to join the church. The key to church growth is for the local congregation to focus its evangelistic efforts on the concerns and needs of non-Christians, but not to pressurize or manipulate them to come to church.

Figure 10 Test Scores for Need-Oriented Evangelism



- 1. Church Programs apply to non-Christians.*
- 2. Members are friendly to new Christians*
- 3. The evangelistic activities lack imagination.*
- 4. We are open to new people*
- 5. Evangelism is discussed in our church*
- 6. I bring my friends and relatives to church.*
- 7. I pray for those who do not know Jesus*
- 8. I understand my faith*
- 9. I relate with unbelievers*

Michael Green defines evangelism as proclaiming the good news of salvation to men and women with a view to converting them to Christ and incorporation in the church.⁶⁴ Evangelism is the response of the church to the Great Commission of Christ to believers to go into the world and

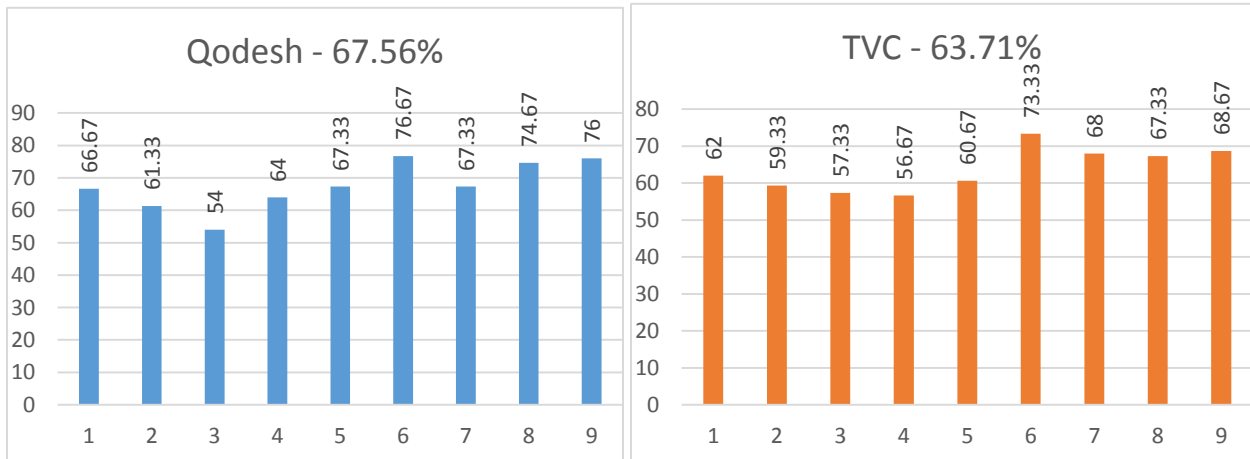
⁶⁴ Michael Green, *Evangelism In the Early Church* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970), 7.

preach the gospel (Mark 16:15). Qodesh had a higher average score of 71.93% compared to 69.71% of TVC, in terms of need-oriented evangelism. This is a sign of health but church activities should be structured to attract non-Christians. Members should be taught to understand the essence of their faith, to be able to share with unbelievers to draw them to the Christian faith.

(h) Loving Relationship

Growing churches possess on the average a measurably higher “loving relationships” than stagnant or declining ones. For example, how often do they invite one another over for meals or a cup of coffee? How generous is the church in giving compliments? To what extent is the pastor aware of the personal problems of the lay workers in the congregation? How much laughter is there in the church? Unfeigned, practical love has a divinely generated magnetic power far more effective than evangelistic activities which depend almost entirely on verbal communication. People do not want to hear us talk about love only but also to demonstrate it following the admonishing in James 2:14-17 to add good works to our faith, feed the poor and provide shelter for the homeless. Figure 11 shows the survey results of Qodesh and TVC in the area of loving relationships.

Figure 11 Test Scores for Loving Relationships



1. I spend time with friends from church

2. Other church members invite me for dinner

3. I invite other church members for dinner

4. I share my feelings with other Christians

5. We share problems with each other.

6. There is joy and laughter in our church.

7. Members praise each other.

8. We appreciate a good job

9. Divergent opinions are respected.

The area in which both churches had a lower score is the area of inviting each other for dinner.

The loving relationships amongst the members should be extended beyond the church into the homes. There may be people in the church who may have nowhere to go to or nothing to eat after service, and the love expressed during service should be expressed even after the service is over.

4.4.1.4 Analysis of the minimum factors/weaknesses

The minimum factors are those areas which did not receive a favourable scoring and therefore needs to be identified and improved. LCI may be a healthy church but like any other church, it is not perfect. Two major areas which need to be improved are the areas of empowerment and delegation. Pastors who do not seek help from lay people in areas where they are not gifted do

not empower the lay people. The ability to delegate, as was done by the apostles in Acts 6 will free the pastors from minor tasks so they can focus on the vision God has given them.

Another area which did not receive a favourable scoring is the area of spiritual gifts. Their members' inability to identify and utilize their spiritual gifts does not foster spiritual growth. This can be linked to the observation that there is an attempt to emulate the founder and leader of the church and as a result, people are not able to discover their unique gifts. Most of the pastors preach like the leader and their sermons are either from the founder's book or from his tapes. Therefore there is not much room for creativity and self-discovery and this hinders one from exercising one's own spiritual gifts.

One other weakness is the rigid organisational structure which does not promote church life. This is from the members' perspective. They believe that in some way, the organizational structure and the long chain of command does not promote church life. However the leaders can be justified in the sense that the church is not a secular entity. Rather the church is a spiritual organization which is governed by the word of God and not by democratic principles.

4.5 Summary

After studying Qodesh and True Vine Chapel, it was found out that both churches are healthy churches based on the fact that both passed the NCD test having average scores above 50%. However, the study also reveals deficiencies in certain areas which call for improvement. Therefore recommendations are going to be made for further improvements in those areas.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Recommendations

The following principles can be adopted to help improve LCI in all facets.

i. Empowering Leadership

Leadership is pivotal to the growth of a local church, and the strengthening of Strong Pastoral Leadership is vital for the continuous, healthy growth of any church. In this present age, 360 degrees leadership with the ability to design dynamic community networks for synergetic development and growth of its people is essential for pastoral leadership. Such leadership will assure continuous and powerful development of potential leaders within the community, which in turn, will magnetically pull into the community those who desire to grow as leaders.

ii. Gift-Oriented Ministry

A spiritual gift is a divine enablement which the Holy Spirit imparts upon Christians for the work of the ministry. Paul wrote, “To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good . . . One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:7, 11). As each part of the human body has a particular function, so does each member of the body of Christ (cf. 12:14).

It is very essential for each member to discover one’s gift to facilitate growth. LCI is a highly charismatic ministry that believes in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, the results show that many of the members have not identified their spiritual gifts. Therefore, along with leadership

development, the strengthening of the Lay ministry according to spiritual gifts is vital for effectual growth of every individual in the whole body of Christ. When God's disciples discover their spiritual gifts and use them effectively for the edification of His body, the whole body grows in health, as every single part of the body becomes strong and mature.

iii. Passionate Spirituality

Knowing their spiritual gifts does not necessarily mean that members will employ the gifts to serve the church. It takes passion, joy and commitment for members to use their spiritual gifts.

Most churches today plan ministries first, and then look for people to serve in these areas. Again, they search for people with zeal rather than considering professionalism or gifts. Churches cannot thrive by this method. If churches keep hiring volunteers through this way, their ministry will be very limited, and only a few people will be able to serve the church. The most effective approach is to let members develop areas of ministries where they love and are interested. A variety of ministries will be established and people who have interest in each area will be able to join the ministry. In turn, members will devote themselves to ministries in churches with joy and happiness, and their services will help build the church

iv. Functional structures

It is evident from the survey that the main area which needs improvement is the functional structures. Both churches received their lowest score in these areas. Qodesh Scored 31% while TVC scored 28 %. The organizational structure of a church has a strong correlation with the performance of that church. People need to be aware of the goals and future plans of the church.

Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk suggest Ten Practical Steps for Building Passionate Spirituality for Healthy Church Growth:⁶⁵

- A. Develop a stronger awareness in your church that church structures have spiritual relevance. The goal is to increasingly develop structures in the church that can undergird the process of church development as strongly as possible.
- B. Take full responsibility for the structures that currently can be found in your church.
- C. Define your church mission statement in writing.

Each church has a certain calling, a God-given individuality. To have a standard you can use to evaluate existing structures, it is important to concretize this individuality by writing a church mission statement. If a mission statement has already been developed, questions that might ensure can include:

- i. What makes us distinct?
- ii. What three adjectives best describe the character of our church?
- iii. What kind of persons feel especially at home in our church?

- D. Identify enhancing and hindering structures.
- E. Develop a set of measurable goal for the handling of church structures. In the light of your church mission statement, you should aim at extending those structures which serve overall goals, while changing or even dismantling those structures that only seem to be a barrier to realizing overall goals.

⁶⁵Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk, pp63-70.

- F. Evaluate all structures according to their potential for multiplication. There is no one suitable infrastructure for church growth which is generally valid everywhere. What may be right in one situation can be wrong in another.
- G. Apply the existing gifts of members more consistently to the less developed quality characteristics of the church and devote the greatest number of gifts possible to those areas of the ministry of the church.
- H. Cut as many programs and activities as possible which do not contribute to the development of the church. Just as most cells of the human body are renewed over a period of time, so must it happen in the church: old things must die so that new ones can take shape. This is a law that God Himself has embedded in His creation.
- I. Develop an organizational chart. Have a responsible person for each of the areas of work that are linked to the eight quality characteristics.
- J. Monitor the effectiveness of your steps.

v. *Inspiring Worship*

To worship God should be the first priority of all Christians. Worshipping God should be the essence of going to church. The result of the survey reveals that both Qodesh and TVC had good scores in relation to worship. They organize different worship services to meet the needs of various groups in society. Care must be taken however, not to lose sight of the fact that worship is to please God and not man.

vi. *Holistic Small groups*

The results reveals that Qodesh and TVC scored 65.04% and 66.4% respectively in holistic small groups. Both churches must open various small groups so that people can adjust well like they

would with their close friends, relatives and family members at home. For those who come to church, but do not know who God or what the Bible is, the group must allow them to make the adjustment to an unfamiliar environment. The church must not only study the Bible, through small groups but also there must be opportunities to share their personal lives. This time can be used by God to bring healing to those who are suffering inside.

vii. Need-Oriented Evangelism

Qodesh scored 71.93% and TVC scored 69.71% in need-oriented evangelism, meaning the two churches are healthy. Both churches are very eager in evangelism. They have different groups and teams who evangelize every day, and they try various kinds of evangelism methods. When the team evangelizes, it determines specific targets and shares the gospel according to each person's special needs. As a result, they have new members joining each year.

viii. Loving Relationships

Qodesh scored 67.56% and TVC scored 63.71% in loving relationship, which is good. But a closer look at each question on the questionnaire reveals that members do not spend a lot of time together apart from regular church worship or meetings. They encourage and complement one another but seldom invite each other to their homes and share with meals. LCI is famous for its members' loving attitudes. One of the reasons for this is the love that the founder Bishop Dag Heward Mills' has towards LCI members. This act of love was reciprocated towards one another.

In addition to the principles, it is important to:

- Project Christ as the Head and the Leader of the church

God wants His church to grow. He will be delighted to see His church growing and spreading to all nations. In order for a church to grow, the church has to be healthy, the growth will then occur naturally. Our duty is to sow the seeds, it is God who gives the increase. Growth therefore is the work of God through man. Jesus says, “On this rock I will build my church” (Matt 16:18). Likewise, the Apostle Paul exhorted the Ephesus elders “to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). Simply speaking, it means that the master of the church is Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5 describes him as the head and believers are his body. Rick Warren writes, that a local church has power that drives the church, including tradition, people, money, and culture.⁶⁶ But he states that a church must be driven by a biblical purpose, and this purpose is accomplished when Jesus Christ becomes the master of the church.

- Recognise the role of the Holy Spirit in church growth.

In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit was at work within the church and through this revival, God expanded His kingdom and early churches started growing daily. Likewise, the growth that LCI has experienced has happened by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Any Church who is seeking growth in this century must recognize and appreciate the role of the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁶Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 77-79.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research about church health and church growth investigates the role of health in growing a church in this 21st century. Having found LCI to be a healthy church, it can be concluded that the health is a major contributing factor to its growth both numerically and spiritually. This is one of the secrets behind LCI and most churches across the globe who are experiencing rapid growth in this day. This also goes to validate the statement made by Rick Warren that a the issue for the 21st century church is not church growth but church health, and that if a church is healthy, it will grow in ways that God intends it to grow. Having made this conclusion, it is expedient that other Churches who seek growth should focus their attention on health first, then growth can occur naturally. This is because health is imperative to the growth of a church. The church can start by testing its health, and applying the growth principles outlined in this research to maximise growth.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRES

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Uncertain 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

A. EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

1 2 3 4 5

Q1. The leaders of our church have an inspiring optimism.					
Q2. The leaders of our church prefer to do the work themselves rather than delegate it.					
Q3. The leaders of our church concentrate on the tasks for which they are gifted.					
Q4. Our pastor looks for help from lay people to complement those areas in which he is not gifted.					
Q5. The leaders of our church prefer to evade conflicts.					
Q6. Our pastor has too much work to do					
Q7. Our pastor gives a lot of church members the opportunity to help in organizing the church service.					
Q8. Our pastor seems to feel at home in our church.					

B. GIFT-ORIENTED MINISTRY

1 2 3 4 5

Q1. I know my spiritual gifts.					
Q2. I enjoy the tasks I do in the church fellowship.					
Q3. I feel that my church supports me in my ministry					
Q4. It is my experience that God obviously uses my work for building the church					
Q5. The tasks I perform in my church are in accordance with my gifts					
Q6. I feel my task in the church is an enjoyable challenge.					
Q7. I know what value my work has in the total work of the church.					

C. PASSIONATE SPIRITUALITY

1 2 3 4 5

Q1. I give a high percentage of my gross income in tithes and offerings for church support, missions, etc.?					
Q2. I know that other church members pray for me regularly.					
Q3. I enjoy reading the Bible on my own.					
Q4. I experience the transforming influences faith has in the different areas of my life.					
Q5. I am enthusiastic about my church					
Q6. The word of God is the most important authority in the decisions of my everyday life.					
Q7. Very often, I have reason to thank God for His work in my life.					
Q8. Our pastor is a spiritual example.					
Q9. I firmly believe that God will act even more powerfully in our church in the coming years.					
Q10. I often tell other Christians when I have experienced something from God.					
Q11. I enjoy my life					
Q12. People in our church are highly motivated to do church work.					
Q13. Times of prayer are an inspiring experience for me.					

D. FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURES

1 2 3 4 5

Q1. I am fully informed about church plan for church growth.					
Q2. I know which goals our church will pursue in the coming years.					
Q3. It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church promotes church life.					
Q4. The activities of our church are characterized by successful planning and organization.					
Q5. In our church we often try new things.					
Q6. I could write down the organizational structure in my church					
Q7. The lay people of our church are trained frequently.					
Q8. I consider our church to be less traditional.					
Q9. In our church there is a leader for each ministry.					

E. INSPIRING WORSHIP

1 2 3 4 5

Q1. Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me.					
Q2. I enjoy listening to the sermons in the worship service.					
Q3. I feel that the church service has a positive influence on me					
Q4. I feel that sermon in the worship service speaks to my needs.					
Q5. The music in the church services helps me worship God.					
Q6. Optimal care is given to our children during church service.					
Q7. I am often bored in the worship service.					
Q8. My most important motive for attending the church service is a sense of duty.					
Q9. I enjoy bringing visitors to our church services.					
Q10. In our worship services new faces are a rarity.					

F. HOLLISTIC SMALL GROUPS

1 2 3 4 5

Q1. I am a member of a group in my church where it is possible to talk about personal problems.					
Q2. I am a member of a group in my church in which others will pray with me and for me if needed.					
Q3. I am a member of a group in our church in which we talk about spiritual issues.					
Q4. I am a member of a small group in which I feel at home.					
Q5. In my small group we spend lots of time with things which are irrelevant to me.					
Q6. In my small group we show trust towards one another.					
Q7. I can be as active as I like in my small group.					
Q8. In the groups I belong to it is easy for newcomers to be integrated.					
Q9. It is the declared goal of our small groups to start new groups by dividing themselves					

G. NEED ORIENTED EVANGELISM

1 2 3 4 5

Q1. I know that programs exist in our churches which are particularly applicable to non-Christians.					
Q2. New Christians find friends in our church quickly.					
Q3. It is my impression that the evangelistic activities in our church lack imagination.					
Q4. When new people come to church events, we approach them openly and lovingly.					
Q5. In our church the subject of evangelism is discussed at all possible opportunity.					
Q6. I enjoy bringing my friends, colleagues, and relatives to church.					
Q7. I pray for my friends, colleagues, and relatives, who do not yet have faith in Jesus Christ, so that they will come to Jesus.					
Q8. It is for me to sum up in a few phrases what faith means for me.					
Q9. I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet have faith in Jesus Christ.					

H. LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

1 2 3 4 5

Q1. I spend much time with friends from church every week					
Q2. I am often invited by church members (not relatives) for dinner or coffee during the past two months					
Q3. I often invite church members (not relatives) for dinner or coffee during the past two months?					
Q4. I find it easy to tell other Christian about my feelings.					
Q5. In our church it is possible to talk with other people about feelings and problems.					
Q6. There is a lot of joy and laughter in our church.					
Q7. The atmosphere of our church is strongly influenced by praise and compliments.					
Q8. When someone in our church does a good job I tell them.					
Q9. When someone in our church has a different opinion from me, I prefer to be silent rather than to endanger peace.					