

# GHANA TO THE NATIONS - A REPORT ON GHANA'S SENDING AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE RECENT PAST

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## Preface

This paper addresses the mission sending efforts of the Ghanaian Church and mission agencies over time. It addresses Ghana's sending efforts, people group focus, areas or jurisdictions of operation, and how staff workers have been financed.

### GEMA'S Vision 2040

GEMA is of the mind that the task of reaching the Unreached in Sub-Saharan African and beyond is possible. It is said that "... the task of world evangelization (making the gospel available to every man, woman, boy, and girl) is not the responsibility of believers from one specific denomination, culture and language. It is the church in its entirety, with all BELIEVERS from every denomination, culture, and language committed to the task."<sup>[1]</sup> GEMA's Vision 2040 is an all-inclusive, national, and transcendent mission movement aimed at mobilizing, recruiting, preparing/equipping, and sending a 30,000 credible workforce into God's end-time harvest by AD 2040.

Ghana has been involved in missionary sending for some time. Many Ghanaian Christians travel extensively and have been cited in other missionary writings. Indeed Ghanaian Christians are scattered in many nations across the world such as the USA, Germany, Nigeria, Italy, UK, EU, Australia, Asia,

etc. Birgit Herppich says of Africans in the diaspora, "they originate from countries with rapidly growing vibrant Christianity. They have already planted numerous churches in the USA."<sup>[2]</sup> Edu-Bekoe and Wan agree that the planting of diaspora churches is "strategically supplementary to the 'traditional mission paradigm' in the new demographic reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."<sup>[3]</sup> Edu-Bekoe states, "The Ghanaian mainline evangelical and Pentecostal/Charismatic believers 'feel strongly obligated by the Holy Spirit to send the Gospel back to the West...'"<sup>[4]</sup> True to its definition, Ghanaian Christians are sown over the whole world ('dia' - over; 'speiro' - sow - Greek rendering of diaspora).<sup>[5]</sup>

### Defining 'Nations'

A nation indicates 'a large group of people living in one area.'<sup>[6]</sup> Countries are arbitrarily divided by their locations on a map. However, there are Biblical and missiological people group considerations which refer to 'ethné'. Ethné is represented by different words such as Gentiles, Nations, People, and Pagans under the leadership of missiological thinkers such as Paul Eshleman and Luis Bush.<sup>[7]</sup> The biblical emphasis is however laid on 'panta ta ethné' i.e., all the nations (Matthew 28:19; Genesis 18:18; 22:18; 26:4).

<sup>[1]</sup> Bill Berop. World Thrust International. Newsletter, 2019.

<sup>[2]</sup> Birgit Herppich, "Immigrant Communities in America - Objects of Mission or Missional Agents? The Case of the Church of Pentecost (Ghana) in Urban America." Presentation at NAMLC, Scottsdale, AZ. September 29 - October 01, 2011.

<sup>[3]</sup> Yaw Attah Edu-Bekoe, and Enoch Wan - "Scattered Africans Keep Coming: As Case Study of Diaspora Missiology on Ghanaian Diaspora and Congregations in the USA." (Western Seminary, Portland, OR: 2013) p. 4

<sup>[4]</sup> Yaw Atta Edu-Bekoe, Scattered Africans Keep Gathering: A Case Study of Diaspora Missiology On Ghanaian Migration And Protestant Congregations In The USA. (The Missiological Society of Ghana, Accra: 2018). p7.

<sup>[5]</sup> Ibid, p. 5

<sup>[6]</sup> Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. 2003.

<sup>[7]</sup> Luis Bush, The Meaning of Ethne in Matthew 28:19. September 2013 Water + Gospel = Transformation. Downloaded from www.missionfrontiers.org., August 31, 2020).

A simple analysis shows that people groups cut across geographical countries and such people have several cultural issues in common. Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary describes a nation as "a large group of people of the same race who share the same language, traditions, and history, but who might not all live in one area".<sup>[8]</sup> For example, the Ewe people cut across Ghana, Togo, and Benin with language ramifications in Nigeria too.

The Ghanaian Church has been poised to reach minority tribes in the cities and/or majority unreached and unengaged people groups (UUPGs) worldwide. Going to the Nations, (GEMA's Vision 2040) also targets major religious blocks of people who have not been reached yet. In this vein, it is important to note that Islam is a major unreached religious block whose impact is felt among many UPGs in Africa and other continents. The global population of this block has grown from 12.9% in 1900 to 22.9% in 2010 and Islam's fastest growth is in West Africa, Indonesia, and the USA.<sup>[9]</sup>

### **Ghana's Historical Antecedents: From Mission Field to Mission Force**

Ghana's role in missionary sending has been noted and is central to several international surveys conducted over the years.<sup>[10]</sup> Hitherto, Ghana, like many other African nations, received missionaries whose work supports the socio-economic and educational development process. This section addresses Ghana's current contribution and readiness to continue 'missions to the nations.' Amos Markin of Church of Pentecost (CoP) remarks, "Christian missionary activity in the Gold Coast (Ghana) dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century through Roman Catholic mission. Between 1787 and 1893, various European nations such as England, Holland, France, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany erected considerable settlements in forts and castles along with the coast of Ghana. These explorers used the services of Protestant chaplains. Beginning from this era, various Western missionary societies, predominantly evangelical, sent their

missionaries and chaplains to work in Ghana."<sup>[11]</sup> To take the Gospel to the nations demands strategy and that is what GEMA Vision 2040 is all about – to release a new bloodstream of missionary workers to reach the unreached. GEMA has also accepted a 'reverse mission strategy' to take the Gospel to the home of its early missionaries. The priority, however, is the Unreached People Groups around the world, starting from Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **What has been done by the Ghanaian Church and mission agencies**

Three categories of missionary senders are discussed. Four mainline (mission-based) Churches, two indigenous Churches, and three mission agencies. The mainline churches include the Church of Pentecost (CoP), the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Methodist Church, Ghana, and the Assemblies of God, Ghana. Indigenous Churches are the Lighthouse Chapel International and the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC). The missionary organizations/agencies based in Ghana are Pioneers-Africa, Youth With A Mission, and Living Bread Missions cum Reaching the Unreached. A note is also taken of the Christian Outreach Fellowship, the pioneer Ghanaian missionary agency, and Torchbearers Mission who took early steps towards reaching the nations.

Have our African mission efforts come of age? Edu-Bekoe vividly captures the readiness of African Christianity to reach the world. He comments on the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 and its centennial celebration in Tokyo 2010 as a paradox which attests to the actions of the being, power, and operations of God, the Holy Spirit as well as the Sovereignty of God, the Father. Concerning the Edinburgh 2010 world missions conference, Edu-Bekoe states that some of the leading participants even predicted that by the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Africa would be taken over by Islam. Hundred years after this landmark missionary conference, in Tokyo 2010, when the Swedish scholar Stefan Gustafson made

<sup>[8]</sup> Cambridge Advanced Learner' Dictionary. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. 2003.

<sup>[9]</sup> Jason Mandyrk, Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to the Nations. WEC International; IVP Books, Downers Grove, IL, 2010. p22.

<sup>[10]</sup> REMAP I & II - Missionary Attrition Survey and Missionary Retention Survey. (World Evangelical Alliance - Missions Commission (1997, 2003).

<sup>[11]</sup> Amos Jimmy Markin, Transmitting the Spirit in Missions. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stocks, 2019). Pp. 7-8.

the passionate appeal to the almost 2,500 delegates to “come over to Macedonia” to help Europe, Africans were heavily represented. Edu-Bekoe insists that “Africa has come of age and must not be perceived as a mission field but rather a mission force, as attested to by Lausanne III, another celebration of Edinburgh 1910, which was hosted by Africa in Cape Town (South Africa) – a testimony to Africa’s ripeness and readiness to be a torchbearer of the Gospel of salvation to the world.<sup>[12]</sup> Edu-Bekoe’s title captures it all, “Scattered Africans Keep Gathering,” – a diaspora analysis of what Ghanaian Christians, especially, are doing across the world.

Louis Nterful endorses the understanding that it is time Christians from the South make inroads into the Northern hemisphere with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In his research on church planting efforts of the Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI), Nterful quotes Ed Stetzer, “Because population groups have migrated over the last decades into North America, combined with the fact that Christianity is no longer the American Religion, North America itself needs to be considered a mission field.”<sup>[13]</sup> Stetzer insists, “We need to be about the business of applying the lens of missions to the fields of North America. Christendom is dead and missionaries are needed.”<sup>[14]</sup> The Ghanaian Church’s role in raising and releasing missionaries to reach migrant populations is critical. LCI’s international outlook is interesting to note: “In 2011, LCI claimed to have 687 churches in 79 countries, with 27,811 members in Ghana and 38,756 members worldwide.<sup>[15]</sup> The LCI as an exceptional indigenous case study has within a short time, mobilized, motivated, and sent out young ‘missionaries’ to distant lands.

### What triggered Ghana’s readiness for reaching the world?

Some early missiologists proposed the 3 Self-

approach which encouraged the independence of missionary churches. Church planters were advised to operate based on self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating principles. Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn propounded much of this theory<sup>[16]</sup> to help missionary Churches develop adequately within the cultures in which they were planted. The strategy encouraged the missionary to go, give, and leave so that the contextualized indigenous Church will continue from there. Rufus Anderson and Roland Allen’s recommendation was to allow missions to ‘produce more missions.’<sup>[17]</sup> Roland Allen focused heavily on Pauline Methods of doing missions. He insists that the New Testament method allows the missionary to do his job effectively, raise leaders, and leave the work of missions in their hands whilst he goes to other regions to initiate missionary activities, expecting the indigenes to take it from there.<sup>[18]</sup> The self-governance component engendered the independence fight in Africa. In that historical epoch, the missionary movement had not started, but administrative leadership was set up for social institutions such as schools, health facilities, and agricultural/economic ventures. Leadership was turned over to nationals – in some cases, reluctantly. A critical point, however, is the problem of financial independence and its ramifications for missionary outreaches to other nations. Most churches or mission agencies were inadequately prepared to fund operational purposes internally. An exceptional and documented case is the Church of Pentecost who had peculiar situations before and during the time of the leadership and missional transition.<sup>[19]</sup> Despite these financial challenges, many Ghanaian and some African Churches or missionary agencies have had tremendous results.

<sup>[12]</sup> Yaw Atta Edu-Bekoe, *Scattered Africans Keep Gathering: A Case Study of Diaspora Missiology on Ghanaian Migration and Protestant Congregations in the USA*. (Ghana Missiological Society, Accra, Ghana, 2018).

<sup>[13]</sup> Louis Nterful, *Church expansion through church planting in Ghana: A case study of the Lighthouse Chapel International Model*, (MA Thesis - Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University, UK: 2013).

<sup>[14]</sup> Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*. (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006).

<sup>[15]</sup> Wikipedia. Lighthouse Chapel International.

<sup>[16]</sup> Lewis, Jonathan, ed. *World Mission – Part II* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987).

<sup>[17]</sup> Lewis, op. cit.

<sup>[18]</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962).

<sup>[19]</sup> Christine Leonard, “A Giant in Ghana: 3,000 Churches in 50 Years. The Story of James McKeown and the Church of Pentecost” (Chichester, England: New Wine Press, 1989).

## The Ghanaian Story So Far

Traditional Missionary approaches to reaching the nations have been adopted by some mission agencies in Ghana and must be recognized as such. Agencies such as Pioneers - Africa, YWAM - Ghana, and the Living Bread Missions (in alliance with Reaching the Unreached) have made some efforts. Advances have been made by other indigenous organizations such as Torchbearers Mission, Christian Outreach Fellowship, and the African Christian Mission to send missionaries to places like Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, and Malawi in recent years. Most of these agencies have been part of the national mission movement, the Ghana Evangelical Missions Association (GEMA) over its 30-year existence.<sup>[20]</sup> Some of these pioneer indigenous mission agencies have left the foreign work to their allies in the respective countries. It must, however, be noted that unlike their Nigerian counterparts who ventured into mainly distant lands like the Arab and Asian countries, the Ghanaian mission agencies have targeted their neighbors in Africa.

So far, great results are reported by the mainline Churches who are reaching the whole world from Ghana. The Church of Pentecost particularly inspires courage because of its style and approach to international missions. "As of December 31, 2016, the CoP documented its presence in 90 nations across the globe, excluding Ghana. The church claims a total membership in these nations of 437,608 believers. "The church has raised 913 ministers and 23,971 lay leaders ... overseeing 4,948 local congregations."<sup>[21]</sup> The CoP's case has significant international impacts.<sup>[22]</sup> Most of the missionary sending churches in this category have administrative and operational bases in Ghana and are funded and/or administered from Ghana. The International Missions Department (IMD of CoP) is a good example. The missionaries they work with are a combination of Ghanaians, foreigners trained and released in Ghana, or

foreigners who are released into their work in other parts of the world under Ghanaian leadership and training. These church denominations and mission agencies have been selected based on the impact they have made in their attempts at taking the Gospel beyond the shores of Ghana, where they have either operated as indigenized Churches or started church planting movements.

Traditional Missions Churches with foreign missionary foundations.

### 1. Church of Pentecost.

As of 2006, the CoP, USA had about 4 major regions with stated membership roles.<sup>[23]</sup> This has exclusive reference to their work in the USA and refers to the Diaspora ministry among the members of the CoP and other nationals of African descent. However, the CoP has broken the myth of reaching other foreign countries where their leaders and members have operated for some time as migrants. Examples abound in the Asian countries where they now boast of indigenes of such countries receiving training and being assigned roles as national overseers and operatives of CoP based in Ghana. The total number of missionaries sent out as Ghanaians to other nations stands at 60 in 2000.<sup>[24]</sup> These are Ghanaian-born missionaries, aside from foreign nationals who have been trained and mobilized by CoP before their sending and placement in various countries around the world.

In Ghana, home missionaries taking care of mission churches are 289, some with a special designation for particular UPGs like the Fulani. CoP's unique advantage is her financial strength which is generated through her structures and fund-raising processes to support missionary work.<sup>[25]</sup> Darko and Atterbury's article, "Towards a Biblical Model of Funding African Missions - The Case of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana," provides excerpts and lessons on why the Church has the muscles for

<sup>[20]</sup> GEMA was inaugurated in February 1990 as an umbrella association to coordinate the world evangelization agenda which emanated from the National Consultation held under the auspices of the Ghana Evangelism Committee in 1989.

<sup>[21]</sup> Amos Jimmy Markin, *Transmitting the Spirit in Missions – The History and Growth of the Church of Pentecost* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock: 2019) p.184.

<sup>[22]</sup> Migration and its impact through COP.

<sup>[23]</sup> Edu-Bekoe, op. cit. p. 303.

<sup>[24]</sup> Baseline Missions Survey Forms filled by International Missions office (July 2020); Ref: Church of Pentecost, International Missions Intercrossors' Guide 2020.

<sup>[25]</sup> Nicholas Darko, A Dissertation Submitted for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology. South African Theological Seminary, March 2018.



expansive missionary outreach.<sup>[26]</sup> It is noteworthy that aside from the foreign mission work, the Church of Pentecost has over 2,590 ministry staff who man their churches nationally and internationally (with about 189 retirees on their records)<sup>[27]</sup>.

## 2. Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

In 2018, Edu-Bekoe noted 36 congregations and preaching points in North America and Australia where Ghanaians (Presbyterians) are serving. The PCG is also actively involved in missionary work, with 149 missionaries in their role. Of the number, 86 are currently serving in foreign missions.<sup>[28]</sup> The target people groups for the home missionaries are the Dagomba, the Mamprusi, and the Basare. The Directorate indicates that they are targeting China and Ukraine for foreign missionary placements. Most of the missionary activity is sponsored by local churches and designated denominational funds. The average age of those working as missionaries is 45. The PCG is also determined to mobilize, equip, and send more missionaries to other unreached people groups (UPGs) in Ghana. The PCG has long been known for its involvement in community development work including in health and education.

## 3. The Methodist Church of Ghana.

The Methodist Church Ghana came into existence as a result of the missionary activities of the Wesleyan Methodist Church which was inaugurated with the arrival of the Reverend Joseph Rhodes Dunwell in January 1835, in the Gold Coast (Ghana).<sup>[29]</sup> The Church has grown from that beginning to this day. From statistics gathered, the Methodist Church of Ghana has 63 full-time missionaries and 39 of them are serving in foreign fields outside Ghana, as of the first quarter of 2020<sup>[30]</sup>. The Evangelism and Missions directorate indicates that they are targeting Burkina Faso for more foreign missions. The Church admits that most of the churches planted from their foreign missions endeavors are Methodist Churches. Within

Ghana, their major missionary focus is among the Mamprusi and Banda people. Most of the financing for the missionary outreaches are derived from denominational funds. The average age of their missionaries again is 45 and as soon as they are appointed, they are released to the designated field since most of the support is raised. A good number of Ghanaian Methodists in the diaspora are also noted by Edu-Bekoe as sharing their faith with other internationals.

## 4. The Assemblies of God Church.

With their first recruits, Miss Beulah Buchwalter and Guy Hickok started the first Assemblies of God congregation. The zeal of these early missionaries was so strong that they consistently worked and witnessed for the Lord under very harsh conditions and in hostile environments, resulting in the death of Bushwalker and Hickock in 1942 on the mission field. Branches of the church were established at Tamale and Walewale in 1935, and Bawku in 1937.<sup>[31]</sup> Through the years the AOG has maintained its autonomous local church standards but was conscious of its missionary roots. With time, it has been reported that their Pastoral sending tradition has produced 274 Ghanaian outlets.<sup>[32]</sup> These transplanted Pastors are mostly serving in North America, Europe, and West Africa and are sponsored by local churches and friends and families (individuals) who have been connected to them. From their indigenous focus on the Dagomba, the Assemblies of God has in recent years focused on local unreached people groups such as the Sisaala, Larteh, Kotokoli, Lobi, Mamprusi, Nanumba, Wala in Ghana, aside from their work in the aforementioned foreign fields.

## Situating Foreign Missions in the Ghanaian Diasporan Realities

It is important to note that the earlier mentioned Churches' sending is mainly from a Diaspora approach. Much of this work is distinct from the

<sup>[26]</sup> Nicholas Darko and Vincent Atterbury, "Towards a Biblical Model of Funding African Missions - The Case of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana." *Conspectus: Journal of South African Theological Seminary*. Vol 26; September 2018. pp 28-45.

<sup>[27]</sup> Baseline Missions Survey Forms filled by International Missions office (July 2020). Administered by author.

<sup>[28]</sup> Baseline Missions Survey forms filled by the Missions Director of the PCG (April 2020).

<sup>[29]</sup> <https://www.methodistchurch.org.gh/beginning-of-methodism-in-ghana/>. Downloaded on 21st October 2020.

<sup>[30]</sup> Baseline Missions Survey Forms filled by the Evangelism and Missions Director, Methodist Church of Ghana (June 2020).

<sup>[31]</sup> <https://newswatchgh.com/how-assemblies-of-god-church-has-evolved-in-ghana/>. Downloaded on 21st October 2020.

<sup>[32]</sup> Baseline Missions Survey Forms filled by Foreign Missions

traditional missionary approach to cross-cultural ministry in that the outreach wings of the Ghanaian Church had been a way of ministering to Ghanaians and other Africans in the diaspora with the Gospel. Some mission literature refers to such ‘missionaries’ as transplanted pastors.<sup>[33]</sup> A lingering argument is that the ‘missionaries’ touch heavily on their kind, but have not reached unreached Westerners in their attempts. However, the ‘intentionality is changing’ and the Diaspora ‘missionaries’ are encouraged to target their host countries and people groups with the Gospel since it is recognized, especially in Europe, that the traditional church had fallen into apostasy. Francesca Scrinzi confirms the background and determination of Sub-Saharan migrants in Europe. She maintains that migrants, whether from mainline protestant historical churches or evangelical churches, “are characterized by an emphasis on the personal experience of conversion and the encounter with God – the ‘born-again’ experience – as well as by religious activism aimed at converting others.”<sup>[34]</sup>

Apostle Amos Jimmy Markin, indicates that much of CoP’s work comes ‘through the experiential power and reliance on the Holy Spirit and the indigenous factor...’<sup>[35]</sup> He contends that the African Church (to wit the African Pentecostals in general) is involved in the current growth, mission, and changing face of global Christianity. In the same spirit, Apostle Prof Opoku Onyinah contends that the missionary movement beyond Ghana, ‘...has a deliberate intention for the reverse mission.’<sup>[36]</sup>

## Indigenous Ghanaian Churches Reaching the World

1. International Central Gospel Church (ICGC). The ICGC is an indigenous Ghanaian Church with extensive operational branches in Ghana. The Church launched its intentional missionary movement after some years of operation. As

of 2020, it has reported 113 missionaries in various fields in the home and foreign missions departments. Forty-five are directly into foreign missions and oversee denominational churches in different countries in Africa and Europe. Funding to support most of the foreign mission work is drawn from local branches, individuals, and families who understand the vision to reach out to the nations and partly also from designated denominational funds. ICGCs scope of home mission covers tribes such as Wala, Gonja, Bimobas, Sissala, and Kombas. The missionary workforce of the ICGC, average age 30, is much younger than other agencies report.<sup>[37]</sup> The ICGC looks forward to reaching more people groups in Ghana and beyond given its vision for planting 3000 churches worldwide. This vision is attracting the attention of those who are being mobilized.<sup>[38]</sup>

2. Lighthouse Chapel International - now United Denominations Originating from Lighthouse Groups of Churches (UD-LOGC). Lighthouse Chapel International was founded in 1988 by Dag Heward-Mills and headquartered in Accra, Ghana. As of 2017, LCI had more than 1800 branches in 79 countries worldwide (Africa, Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, Australia, the Middle East, and the Americas). White and Acheampong quoted Stewart and Nadia remarking that LCI is one of the largest of the Pentecostal churches that have appeared since the late 1970s in cities in Africa.<sup>[39]</sup> A key element discovered by White and Acheampong in their study of LCI’s success story of sending large numbers of ‘missionaries’ across the continents has to do with effective planning - based on the four principles of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling.<sup>[40]</sup> The most recent of Lighthouses’ advancement is marked in what is referred to as the UD-

<sup>[33]</sup> Kairos Course. The Task Remaining - Chapter 6, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. (Definition of Terms).

<sup>[34]</sup> Francesca Scrinzi, Migrant Christianity: Migration, religion and work in comparative perspective. Evangelical ‘ethnic churches’ in Southern Europe. [https://www.academia.edu/37437639/MigrantChristianity\\_Migration\\_religion\\_and\\_work\\_in\\_comparative\\_perspective\\_Evangelical\\_ethnic\\_churches\\_in\\_Southern\\_Europe\\_FINAL\\_RESEARCH\\_REPORT?email\\_work\\_card=reading-history](https://www.academia.edu/37437639/MigrantChristianity_Migration_religion_and_work_in_comparative_perspective_Evangelical_ethnic_churches_in_Southern_Europe_FINAL_RESEARCH_REPORT?email_work_card=reading-history). 2018). Assessed 4<sup>th</sup> September 4, 2020.

<sup>[35]</sup> Amos Jimmy Markin. Transmitting the Spirit in Missions - The History and Growth of the Church of Pentecost. Wipf & Stock, Eugene, OR. 2019.

<sup>[36]</sup> *ibid* (back cover notes)

<sup>[37]</sup> Baseline Missionary Survey Forms filled by Missions Director (July 2020).

<sup>[38]</sup> Conversation with Rev. Lewis Fiadjoe, the Missions Director of ICGC (August, 2020).

<sup>[39]</sup> White, P. & Acheampong, B.O., ‘Planning and management in the Missional agenda of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church: A study of Lighthouse Chapel International’, *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38(1), a1699. <https://doi.org/10.2017/410>.

OLGC - United Denominations Originating from Lighthouse Groups of Churches. “UD-OLGC is made up of 18 denominations, over 6,075 churches 111 Bishops in 92 countries.<sup>[41]</sup> The available information does not support or delineate directly how many of the denomination’s leaders are directly considered as missionaries. It is however remarked that UD-OLGC aims at raising 2000 Apostles.<sup>[42]</sup> This introduces the concept of being intentional and strategic in mission sending. It is remarked that LCI’s success also hinges on the worldview that all professions are mobilized for the mission field, “With this worldview, the missional church understands itself to be a missionary by nature – called, equipped and sent into the world by the Holy Spirit to participate fully in God’s mission (Van Gelder 2005:23).<sup>[43]</sup>

## Ghanaian Mission Agencies Reaching the World

### 1. Pioneers – Africa (PA)

Pioneers-Africa is a mission agency founded in Ghana. The founding Director, a Medical practitioner, along with other compatriots worked in reaching the Fulani in Mali for a long time. Pioneers-Africa has also been daring in its attempts to reach diverse groups in North Africa through the Desert Streams Initiative and other collaborative efforts with their partners abroad. PA currently has 120 missionaries serving in different UPG locations in Ghana, Africa, and beyond. The total number of direct foreign missions is 37 and dispersed in different locations across the globe. One of such foreign missionaries is a Ghanaian Deputy Director of Pioneers’ global organization, currently serving in Thailand. The average age of missionaries is 40.

Being true to the local roots the PA reaches several Ghanaian UPGs including but not

limited to the Banda/Ligbi, Bimoba, Chokosi, Dagabas, Dagomba, Fante, Fanti Kramo, Frafra, Fulani, Hausa, Kokomba, Kusasi, Mamprusi, Mossi, Nafaana, Nanumba, Sissala, and the Talensi.<sup>[44]</sup> Most of these UPGs are Muslim-based communities. The PA is strictly non-denominational and plants Churches that are handed over to various denominational groups across the fields served. Pioneers-Africa does a lot of friend-raising efforts with local churches and denominations to generate resources for the missionaries that are sent out.

### 2. Youth With A Mission - (YWAM - Ghana)

YWAM Ghana started many years ago in the port city of Tema. The focus of the worldwide ministry has been in discipleship training of missionaries, who are then deployed mostly on a short-term basis to different communities and countries. Most of the trainees eventually return to their mother organizations and are thus deployed for appropriate mission assignments. As such YWAM doesn’t keep records of sending missions directly to specific countries. The staff draws its mission support from individuals, families, and local churches. The foreign ‘student-missionaries’ usually return to their bases and home countries. The Director of the Kumasi Training base indicates that foreign trainees/graduates return to serve in foreign countries but are not under YWAM’s jurisdiction.<sup>[45]</sup>

### 3. LBM/Reaching the Unreached.

The Living Bread Missions is an indigenous missionary work committed to training, outreach, and church planting. It has a working relationship with Reaching the Unreached which operated a missionary training base in Ghana but stopped the training and eventually mobilized all its graduates to serve among the Unreached People Groups in Ghana and Togo initially. The work eventually expanded

<sup>[40]</sup> Dayton, E. & Fraser, D., Planning strategies for world evangelization, Eerdmans Publishing Company, San Francisco, CA. 2005).

<sup>[41]</sup> www.dagheawardmills.org. Downloaded on 31st October 2020 (World Vision of UD-LOGC).

<sup>[42]</sup> op. cit. n.p.

<sup>[43]</sup> Van Gelder, C., ‘Rethinking denominations and denominationalism in light of a missional ecclesiology.’ (Word and World 25(1), 2005), 23–33.

<sup>[44]</sup> Baseline Missionary Survey Forms filled by Pioneers Africa Director (June 2020).

<sup>[45]</sup> Personal conversation with, and survey result from Pastor Lewis Roberts - YWAM Kumasi (July 2020).

into Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. The current collaborations have operations among the following major UPGs in **Ghana** Banda/Ligbi, Sissala, Mamprusi, Fulani, Wala, Lobi, Birifor, Dagari, Busanga, **Togo**: Moba, Gourmanche, Anufo, Chokossi, Gamgam, Ewe, etc., **Cote D'Ivoire**: Agni, Baoule, Djula, Lobi.

Most of the over 100 churches planted are independent and are run by the missionaries and their supporting pastors who have been disciplined and empowered in the process. The 41 key missionaries average of 45 years. Plans are afoot to reach out to more UPGs. Part of the funding for the fundamental care of missionaries is provided by friends based in the USA - except a few of the missionaries who are reliant on funds generated from local church tithes and local friends.

### **What Does the Future Hold for Ghana's Mission to the World?**

There is ample evidence that the Ghanaian church has indeed come of age and has been involved in missions to other nations. As we strategize to use the professional and manpower resources, we stand to a greater advantage of reaping heavy partnership benefits of the Church. A large and resourceful diaspora exists to take the agenda of Vision 2040 forward and feed into the vision for the world. A well-trained/disciplined young and exuberant traveling Ghanaian is an asset to the Kingdom agenda. Efforts are encouraged to explore missional synergy as we reduce the excessive focus on denominations.

As it stands now, Ghana Vision 2040 aims at raising, equipping, and releasing 30,000 people (with emphasis on but not limited to young people as missionaries) to the nations of the world. We are bonafide participants in God's agenda and vision for the unreached world. As broad as the vision stands, GEMA by her vision is but a catalyst and will explore the opportunities already available in the Ghanaian Church and missionary organizations as demonstrated.

- a. GEMA Vision 2040 sounds the alarm for more intentional involvement in the Master's mission across the borders of many nations. It is also a clarion call to know who is serving

in what field and thereby allow synergy in the work of mission. Vision 2040 is a call to the body of Christ and not specialized for a category of Christian involvement. Vision 2040 urges local churches and para-church organizations to engage in foreign and indigenous collaborations - preparing the Church for greater achievements in missionary endeavors (1 Cor 14:7-8).

- b. The Ghanaian church has successful multifunctional and multi-denominational perspectives of missions. We are duty-bound to draw on missionary best practices to enhance future performances. We must assess our collective weaknesses and learn how to leverage our strengths to get the best results. There is a great opportunity for some round-table discussions among leaders so that we can explore Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and Amos 3:3 concepts within missions.
- c. Posterity will be grateful to current leaders if partnerships and, particularly, mission synergy is developed for the Ghanaian missionary enterprise. Such synergy will explore human resource mobilization as a priority factor. What a great privilege it would be if the local church deploys its members in mission fields through workable discipleship structures, which are sometimes best administered by para-church organizations. What beauty would result if professionals from different backgrounds working in an unreached community collaborate to bring the message of salvation to the indigenes, demonstrating that we are all serving the same living Jesus!
- d. It is time to fully explore the professional 'capital' of the young and resilient missionary force.<sup>[46]</sup> It has become amply evident through campus ministry engagements that more Christian professionals are ready to be sent to the nations. The need is for appropriate Discipleship systems to prepare such professionals before they launch into the Diaspora. When Ghanaian Christian professionals in the diaspora also agree to be mentors and models for such young people across the board, adequate and supplementary help will be available to young missionaries. Young professionals are the existing contingency that must be empowered and encouraged.

<sup>[46]</sup> Sampson Dorkunor, REMAP II Report on Ghana, (Connections: The Journal of the WEA Missions Commission, Vol 2 No. 2., June 2004), p59-61.



Bishop Heward-Mills remarked that he has many medical doctors, specialists, lecturers, architects, and engineers, all of who are serving as lay pastors (Heward-Mills 2007b:3). Thus, every individual in the church shares the burden of ministry and carrying out the mission of God.<sup>[47]</sup>

- e. Financial equipping is so vital to the growth and re-engineering of the missions architecture in-country and abroad - especially for full-time missionaries. Without an adequate financial stand at home, it will be difficult to support missionaries abroad. Again, if the agencies work together, best practices in raising and spending money will be shared. The challenge remains especially for para-church organizations to understand how to be self-sustaining, self-reproducing, and self-governing and also how to partner with the mainline Church in mission support.

Among the challenges to be dealt with as the Ghanaian Church considers her role in international missions is keeping the missionaries in shape and ready to spend and be spent. We need a form of member care that produces resilient, healthy, and effective missionaries<sup>[48]</sup> who will deliver the Gospel message and cause transformation in the communities they are sent to. From a concerted and coordinated front, missionary agencies and local churches can forge missionary support systems that will endure and encourage more people to get enrolled in the service of the Master. This includes simple insurance cover for health, retirement, and death. If all the numbers of Ghanaian missionaries are collated and congregated into the working force with adequate and workable policies, we will go far as a mission-sending nation. A strong mission support system will involve:

- ▶ Challenging the Ghanaian Church to explore her indigenous God-given (and sometimes boasted about) resources for missionary endeavors.
- ▶ Challenging the Ghanaian Diaspora Church to consider her roots<sup>[49]</sup> and offer the necessary financial support for indigenous missionary endeavors.
- ▶ Calling for feasible and workable Partnerships

with the world missionary movement. This is a call for equal partnerships with all the varied resource endowments - without inferior - superior notions.

With such potent considerations, Ghana Vision 2040 is Mission Possible: Ghana To The Nations!!!

GEMA's role at this crucial point in mission history is a determinant of how engaged the younger generation will be for the decades ahead. GEMA's role is that of a network facilitator! GEMA stands the great opportunity of being a rapporteur and facilitator on what is happening with Ghanaian missions without interrupting the flow of work in the denominations and individual para-church groups.

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<sup>[47]</sup> White and Acheampong, op, cit.

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<sup>[49]</sup> World Bank and other statistics on remittances to homes etc.

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