

## P. White

Dr. P. White, Department  
Practical Theology and  
Missiology, Stellenbosch  
University.

E-mail: [pwhite@sun.ac.za](mailto:pwhite@sun.ac.za)  
ORCID: [https://orcid.org/  
0000-0002-8177-140X](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8177-140X)

DOI: [http://dx.doi.  
org/10.18820/23099089/actat.  
v42i2.25](http://dx.doi.org/10.18820/23099089/actat.v42i2.25)

ISSN: 1015-8758 (Print)

ISSN: 2309-9089 (Online)

**Acta Theologica 2022**  
42(2):374-377

**Date received:**  
15 August 2022

**Date published:**  
14 December 2022



Published by the UFS  
<http://journals.ufs.ac.za/index.php/at>

© Creative Commons  
With Attribution (CC-BY)



# BOOK REVIEW

## *Intergenerational missiology: An African Pentecostal-Charismatic perspective*

Christian Tsekpoe, (Oxford: Regnum  
Books International, 2022). pp.213. ISBN:  
978-1-914454-40-0.

The book addresses the challenges of mission approaches and their effects on subsequent generations, with a special focus on The Church of Pentecost (CoP). Many Pentecostal scholars recognise the CoP as one of the largest Pentecostal churches in Ghana. It was founded by a British Pentecostal missionary, Reverend James McKeown. This book examines his approaches to missions as well as their relevance to the contemporary generation. The author argues that one of the biggest difficulties many of its denominations confront after a century of Pentecostal-Charismatic outreach in Africa is how to remain contextually relevant and last past the founding age without losing their authenticity and character.

This problem frequently causes a chasm between the Church's generations. Thus, the younger generation – whose cultures have been influenced by the forces of globalisation – advocates for changes in many of the church's activities, while the older generation attempts to idealise the past and maintain what they regard to be authentic rituals for posterity (pp.4-6).

The author proposes an Intergenerational Mission Approach (IGMA) as a missiological

requirement for African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity to alleviate this problem. The seven chapters of the book have seven presentations of this thesis. The book contends that, as generational variances in culture have an impact on Christian mission, mission theology should be reviewed for each generation. Although the book has eight chapters, the author presents his arguments in seven of its chapters. The eighth chapter focuses on the summary and conclusions of the arguments presented.

In Chapter One, the author discusses the history of the growth of Pentecostalism in Ghana, the three major policy changes of the CoP from 1993 to 2010, as well as James McKeown's ministry and missionary approaches in the CoP. The chapter aims to provide adequate information on issues to be addressed in the remaining chapters.

To provide a theoretical framework for analysing both McKeown's mission models from the past and the CoP's current mission praxis, the author, in Chapter Two, examines several mission models developed by missiologists over the years. According to the author, it is essential to have a comprehensive grasp of the advantages and disadvantages of different mission models, in order to provide a window into McKeown's mission praxis and help suggest a long-term strategy for the CoP's mission (pp. 31-43).

Chapter Three of the book examines James McKeown's missionary philosophy and practices, which some CoP members believe had an impact on how the CoP developed in Ghana. Some of the notable mission praxes of James McKeown discussed in the chapter are vernacularisation, simplicity of liturgy, and indigenous leadership formation. Others include conflict management, decision-making and the indigenous factor, as well as direct mentoring as a model of discipleship in mission.

Chapter Four analyses MacKeown's theology and spirituality, with special emphasis on his pneumatological orientation and praxis. This chapter makes the case that McKeown's pneumatological method gave the African spirit world substantial consideration. Every member of the religious community can feel the power of the Holy Spirit, and, by upholding this principle, they are free from the influence of any negative spiritual forces. The emphasis on the importance of the power of the Holy Spirit in mission, whilst mitigating abuses and manipulations in the use of the charisms of the Spirit, is what the author calls "Reflective Pneumatology" (pp. 67-88).

The five models of mission activities in the CoP, namely the Local Mission Model, the Regional Mission Model, the Migration Mission Model, the Reverse Mission Model, and the Reflex Mission Model, are briefly covered in Chapter Five's opening paragraphs (pp. 89-91). The chapter then examines how McKeown approached the "three-self" indigenous church principles:

self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing. The chapter aims to analyse McKeown's response to the diverse Ghanaian cultures and show how it can influence current and future mission strategies for the CoP (pp. 91-103). The chapter notes McKeown's introduction of self-theologising as the fourth indigenous church principle. The author argues that,

to some extent, McKeown attempted to allow the CoP to develop its own local theologies. First of all, he allowed the liturgy of the church to develop from the prevailing cultures: as indicated in Chapter Three, he allowed the Ghanaians to use their local languages, songs, drumming and dancing, as well as Akan traditional appellations to pray (p. 103).

This chapter makes the case that churches are required to respond to the sociocultural needs of various generations without straying from the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ if it is to be considered missiologically relevant to the context in which it operates. It also discusses how this can guide the CoP's current and future mission strategies.

Chapter Six examines the CoP's endeavours to safeguard and pass on the traditions of the founding leaders to successive generations. This transition is essential to continue the church's mission. This chapter opens with a discussion on routinisation and the paradox of passing down CoP's heritage to new generations. It also describes the internal renewal processes among church youth that have been sparked by the external influences of globalisation in modern society. The second generation knew that the founding leaders were stepping down from leadership. The chapter also discusses the CoP's practical attempts to train the next generation to take over church leadership (pp. 128-131). The chapter concludes with a discussion on the ramifications of the CoP's propensity to romanticise the past and impose archaic customs on modern generations, by using Jesus' parable of new wine in old wineskins (pp. 131-136).

In Chapter Seven, the author proposes an Intergenerational Mission Approach (IGMA) for the CoP in Ghana in an effort to address the generational gap issue from a missiological perspective. He argues that,

[a]lthough this approach dialogues considerably with the growing body of research on intergenerationality, its root derives from a constellation of principles underlying James McKeown's mission thought, praxis, and theology in the CoP, Ghana. This method is intended to keep the IGMA contextually and missiologically relevant (p. 139).

The chapter argues that the church must responsibly strike a balance between regional specificities, universal influences, and fundamental Christian principles, in order to stay contextually relevant (p. 162).

In my view, the author has addressed a very important issue pertaining to the CoP as well as their quest to meet the needs of current and future generations. Although this sometimes comes with tensions between the older generation and the younger generation, it is crucial for churches to view their ministry in the context of the changing dynamics around them, and respond accordingly.