

EDITORIAL

Pentecostalism and Models of Mission

The theme of the third edition of the *Pentecost Journal of Theology and Mission* (PJTM) is “Pentecostalism and Models of Mission”.

Mission is God’s idea and the message of the whole Bible is about God’s mission to the nations. However, from biblical times to today, God engages human beings as His missional agents in fulfilling His purpose. Thus, the mission of God is intensely paradoxical, in that, on the one hand, God’s mission is initiated and directed by Him, and God’s mission is realized through the glorious work of God in Christ Jesus manifested through the power of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, God’s mission cannot be achieved without human beings’ participation in weakness as ‘jars of clay’. By referring to human beings as ‘jars of clay’ we mean missionaries, as co-workers of God, must daily acknowledge that they are weak, fragile and powerless in contrast to God’s glorious power that works through them. As Paul reminds us, we are jars of clay “to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Corinthians 4:7).

It is tempting, especially when God is working powerfully in and through human beings, to arrogantly claim the victory for ourselves. This is one of the major challenges that confronts missionaries of all times. The apostle Paul, a missionary to the Gentiles, had to learn this lesson from the Lord, when the Lord told him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

As you read and study the six articles and the two book reviews, we want you to bear this paradox in mind so that we will be humbled by God’s grace as God uses us in His mission. The first three articles provide biblical and theological considerations for Pentecostal missions, and the last three deal with Pentecostal mission praxis. The journal ends with two book reviews.

The first article, “The Calling and Sending of Abraham as a missionary to the nations: A relevant missional model for Today” is written by Dr. Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah. His work is an exposition on the role of Abraham as God’s missionary to the nations, and how Abraham’s

missional model offers lessons that are relevant for missionaries of all ages irrespective of their particular or peculiar theological and denominational persuasions.

The second article, “A Theological Reflection on the Development of Mission Models in the Church of Pentecost and its implications for the Future of Pentecostal Mission in Ghana” by Christian Tsekpoe, presents a brief survey of how mission models have developed in the Church of Pentecost from the time of James McKeown to contemporary times. He uses the ‘Three-self Indigenous Principle’ as well as ‘Shreiter-Bevans’ taxonomy of local and contextual models to better understand the Church of Pentecost’s mission models. He concludes by pointing out the implications of these models for the future of the Church of Pentecost’s involvement in God’s mission in Ghana and elsewhere.

“Pentecostal Mission Praxis: A Review of core Pentecostal Doctrines that drive and shape Pentecostal Models of Mission” is the third article, by Dr. Vincent Anane Denteh. He examines the vast impact that Pentecostalism is currently having on world mission and the theological praxis that are propelling the massive growth. He concludes with vital recommendations for further discussion and re-evaluation of Pentecostal missional praxis in order that the rapid growth of the Pentecostal and charismatic churches may be sustained in the years to come.

The fourth article, “Declining Membership and Attendance in the Traditional Mainline Churches in the Western World: Lessons for Christianity in Ghana”, is written by Dr. Alfred Koduah. While Dr Koduah acknowledges the enormous contributions that the churches in the West had made towards the global expansion of Christianity he is concerned about the apparent decline in the mainline churches of the West. This concern leads him to conduct primary research to explore the factors that may be contributing to the decline in church membership and attendance. Specific factors for this decline emerge from Dr Koduah’s analysis and he concludes by drawing out some helpful lessons that will assist the Pentecostal churches to sustain their growth.

Dr. Nicholas Darko's article, "Pentecostalism and Africa-to-Africa Missions-Financing Praxis" briefly looks at the missions-financing praxis of four Pentecostal churches that are currently engaged in the emerging African-to-Africa missions. The churches are, The Church of Pentecost of Ghana, The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, Light House Chapel International of Ghana, and The Redeemed Christian Church of God of Nigeria. Dr Darko draws attention to the need for professional, planned, financial programmes for God's mission in the world.

The sixth article by Fred Amoakohene Sarpong, "The Place of Music in Missions work in Ghana: with reference to The Church of Pentecost", gives a brief narrative of the role that music has played and continues to play in the churches in Ghana with particular reference to the Church of Pentecost. He examines four musical types in Ghanaian churches, namely, Contrafactum, Eclectic, Creative Essays of Afro-Identity and Spontaneous types. He concludes with a brief comment on the importance of the Psalms in church music.

We end with two book reviews. Professor Amos Yong, reviews *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*, edited by Martin Lindhardt is the first review. The book is a collection of thirteen articles on various aspects of the pentecostal-charismatic movements on the African continent which are worthy of attention from scholars beyond Africa. Prof Yong writes;

"A central theme running throughout the book relates particularly to the political aspects of African pentecostal-charismatic movements, which reference to "postcolonial societies" in the book's subtitle foregrounds. In this vein, there are intriguing and substantive analyses of Pentecostalism as a "post-secular" phenomenon in the African space, of the movement's "spiritual warfare" approach to the political, and of pentecostal preachers as contemporary exemplifications of the traditional "big man rule" in African societies, among other treatments.

Professor Amos Yong, would like “Scholars of world Christianity in general and of Pentecostal-charismatic movements in particular in the South Asian and wider areas to be attentive to development in the African scene”.

The second book review is by Dr Samuel Ofori on Thomas C. Oden’s book, *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity*. After a thorough and exciting review, Dr. Ofori ends with this insightful comment: “The book also helps to deal with the erroneous impression that Christianity is a white man’s religion and thus foreign to Africa. A religion in which Africans have participated since the fourth and fifth centuries is as traditional to Africa as the other African traditional religions”.

The Editors are extremely grateful to our contributors for their articles and reviews making this third edition of PJTM a significant resource in the study of Pentecostalism and Models of Mission. We are pleased to announce the theme of “Pentecostalism and African Traditional Religion” for the next issue of PJTM.

Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah
Chief Editor