

**Intergenerational Missiology: An African Pentecostal-Charismatic Perspective, 2022. By Christian Tsekpoe. Oxford: Regnum. 232pp. \$14.22**

Reviewed by: Jacob Asare, Pentecost University, jasare@pentvars.edu.gh

Tsekpoe's work, "Intergenerational Missiology: An African Pentecostal-Charismatic Perspective," represents a pioneering exploration of the generational aspect of Christian mission. He contends that each generation exists within a unique cultural context that requires its own approach to contextual evangelisation, much like geographical mission fields. Focusing on the Church of Pentecost (CoP) in Ghana as a case study, Tsekpoe examines the growing generational divide between older and younger members of the church and its impact on the church's spiritual vitality, leadership, and overall adaptability.

Tsekpoe argues that while theologians have recognised the importance of contextualising faith, they have largely overlooked generational cultures, instead focusing on ethnic and geographical contexts. The book introduces the idea of intergenerational missiology, a mission strategy that intentionally engages people of different ages within the same faith community.

The book begins by placing the CoP within Ghana's Pentecostal context. Tsekpoe describes it as a classical and indigenous movement started by Rev. James McKeown, whose contextual approach to ministry provided a strong foundation for its global expansion. The first chapter highlights the new tension between the older generation, committed to maintaining McKeown's traditions, and the younger generation, which seeks to adapt them to present-day realities. Tsekpoe sees this tension as both a challenge and an opportunity for missiological innovation.

In the second chapter, the author explores different key mission models, emphasising the importance of contextualisation. He commends the reliance of the CoP on oral theology and lay participation as indicators of cultural sensitivity. However, he critiques traditional mission theories for not acknowledging generational diversity as a cultural element, asserting that this oversight limits their effectiveness in evolving societies.

Chapters three and four explore McKeown's missionary thought, theology, and spirituality. Tsekpoe describes McKeown as a culturally adaptable leader who respected African traditions, was receptive to indigenous languages, and tolerated local expressions of worship, such as drumming and clapping. His leadership style

focused on mentoring and building relationships. McKeown's theological vision located the essence of Pentecostal identity in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, understood as an indispensable work of divine empowerment for the believer. This baptism, evidenced by *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues), was not merely a charismatic experience but a sign of Spirit-filled life, a prerequisite for leadership within the CoP. His "reflective pneumatology", which encourages the discernment of prophetic utterances, emphasises his focus on authenticity and communal accountability.

Chapter five examines McKeown's mission model, which Tsekpoe views as a combination of contextual, adaptive, and countercultural strategies. Although rooted in Scripture, McKeown's willingness to incorporate local customs allowed his message to resonate with Ghanaians and played a key role in the success of his mission.

The sixth and seventh chapters explore intergenerational tensions within the CoP. Tsekpoe likens the situation to "new wine in old wineskins," illustrating the conflict between traditional and modern approaches. He criticises the church's current generation-segregated model, which he believes exacerbates division rather than promotes unity. Tsekpoe proposes intergenerational worship services where children and young people actively participate, rather than merely observing from the sidelines. Nevertheless, he emphasises that integrating children into these services should be done thoughtfully, taking into account their developmental stages.

In the final chapter, Tsekpoe elaborates on his concept of "double listening," a process in which both the young and the old listen attentively to one another. This principle, rooted in African communal culture, fosters reciprocal learning and mutual respect. The author employs the prophecy of Joel, alongside the sermon delivered by Peter in Acts, to support his assertion that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit encompasses all generations. He concludes that mission extends not only to the extremities of the earth but also to the end of the age, involving every generation in the ongoing narrative of the church.

A key strength of Tsekpoe's work is its originality. His concept of intergenerational missiology broadens missionary studies by recognising generational cultures as valid contexts for evangelism. This innovative idea is particularly relevant today, as cultural values vary significantly across different age groups. Additionally, the work is highly contextual, further strengthening its relevance. By grounding his analysis in the CoP and Ghanaian Pentecostal traditions, Tsekpoe situates his argument within a recognisable African setting while offering insights relevant to the global church. The book is notable for its theological depth.

The concepts of "reflective pneumatology" and "double listening" embody a balanced theology that emphasises discernment and promotes a relational, inclusive approach to listening. Furthermore, Tsekpoe's work presents a logical structure that progresses

from historical analysis to theological synthesis and practical application, rendering it both intellectually robust and applicable. Notably, the commendable effort to navigate between tradition and change highlights the importance of this balance. Tsekpoe encourages the church to uphold the foundational principles behind McKeown's practices while adapting their expression to meet contemporary needs. This interplay between continuity and innovation makes his argument transformative.

While the book has its strengths, it also presents several weaknesses. Firstly, although Tsekpoe includes some statistical information on the growth of the Pentecostal movement, he falls short of providing detailed quantitative data regarding generational participation or engagement within the Church of Pentecost (CoP). This omission detracts from the empirical foundation of his arguments. Secondly, the treatment of generational differences tends to be somewhat generalised. The author overlooks the diversity within generations, such as the varying experiences of urban and rural youth or those from different socio-economic backgrounds, which could have provided a more nuanced analysis.

Third, the book does not sufficiently address children's ministry, a crucial aspect of intergenerational engagement. While it advocates for intergenerational worship, it fails to explore how to effectively incorporate children's learning styles and the development of their own spirituality into the proposed model. Additionally, the book has a limited theological scope; its strong Pentecostal orientation restricts its ecumenical appeal, as the insights presented are not adequately contextualised for other Christian traditions. Lastly, the author could have offered more insight into how McKeown's inability to learn the native Ghanaian language affected his ministry and what lessons the current generation might draw from this experience.

I strongly recommend this insightful book by Tsekpoe to everyone involved in pastoral ministry and those seeking a stimulating read. It makes a significant contribution to the study of African and global missions by urging the church to recognise that generational cultures, like geographical ones, must be addressed within their specific contexts. The book effectively bridges the gap between theology and practice while prompting the church to adopt a more holistic and relational approach to mission, one that unites across generations instead of dividing them. This makes it a vital resource for theologians, church leaders, and researchers seeking to understand and apply intergenerational dynamics in contemporary Christianity. I encourage everyone to pick up a copy and join in this vital conversation.