

EDITORIAL

African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity: History, Hermeneutics, Ethics, and Mission

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This second issue of Volume 6 of the Pentecost Journal of Theology and Mission presents a diverse collection of studies centred on African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity while also engaging wider Christian history and thought. Together, these articles highlight the importance of scholarship that is both theologically rigorous and attuned to the practical challenges the church faces in Africa and around the world.¹ The topics addressed include abolitionism and Christianity, missional leadership, prophetic guidance, child safeguarding, workplace ethics, apostolic ministry, African biblical interpretation, and mission among the diaspora. Despite their diversity, the contributions share a concern for examining and strengthening Christian witness through freedom, integrity, healing, accountability, and faithful participation in God's mission, with particular attention to Pentecostal-Charismatic belief and practice.

This issue further exemplifies the journal's commitment to fostering dialogue on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity across biblical studies, theology, ethics, history, pastoral practice, and mission, while remaining open to wider Christian scholarship that illuminates its concerns. The authors employ a range of methodologies, including historical analysis, theological interpretation, empirical research, literature review, and ethnography, to address questions relevant to churches, leaders, and scholars. Rather than separating theology from everyday life, the essays situate Christian belief and practice within public engagement, institutional responsibility, cultural interaction, and the ongoing pursuit of the Spirit's guidance.² Collectively, they invite readers to consider how African Pentecostal-Charismatic communities, in conversation with broader Christian traditions, embody and test their beliefs in practice.

The issue's engagement with wider Christian scholarship begins with Ulrich Berner's critical re-examination of abolitionism within European religious history, which

¹ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013).

² Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); Nimi Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012).

challenges the assumption that Christianity invariably serves as a force for liberation. By analysing the intersections of Stoic philosophy, Christian theology, biblical interpretation, colonial experience, and African perspectives, the author distinguishes between moral or theological critiques of slavery and activist movements seeking its legal abolition. The article traces developments from the Roman era to the modern colonial period, showing how Scripture was employed both to justify oppression and to inspire resistance, while figures such as Equiano underscore African agency in the abolition narrative. Its attention to John Philip and John William Colenso broadens the discussion to forced labour, racial hierarchies, and colonial systems that perpetuated domination in new forms. As a historical overview, the article maps a field of inquiry rather than pursuing a narrowly defined research question. It thereby identifies themes that warrant further investigation and invites future scholarship on the forms of unfreedom that may persist after the legal abolition of slavery.

From this broader historical perspective, the issue turns more directly to African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Michael Pamfwiri Mkandawire's article, "Reimagining Missional Leadership in African Pentecostal Churches," addresses leadership challenges arising from the rapid expansion and growing public influence of African Pentecostal churches. Drawing on church structures, Pentecostal theology, the fivefold ministry in Ephesians 4:11-13, African Pentecostal scholarship, and contemporary leadership theory, the author argues that numerical growth and good organisation alone do not confer credibility or missional effectiveness. He proposes a Spirit-led leadership model grounded in five areas: spiritual foundation, congregational participation, ethical responsibility, leadership development, and contextual awareness. By linking spiritual gifts with the equipping of the whole church, mentoring, clear authority structures, cultural sensitivity, and public engagement, the article responds to centralised leadership, intergenerational tensions, and related dilemmas in African Pentecostal churches. It calls these churches to embody their missional vocation more faithfully.

Prince Osei Yeboah's article examines the growing significance of neo-prophetic *akwankyere*, spiritual guidance through prophecy, prayer, healing, deliverance, counselling, and discernment in Ghanaian Christianity. This phenomenon may help explain why some Methodist and Anglican members seek ministry outside their denominations. Through a review of existing literature and contextual-theological analysis, the author argues that some Historic Mission Churches may not adequately address spiritual and personal concerns related to illness, unemployment, family challenges, witchcraft, curses, and spiritual insecurity. The article advocates biblically

grounded, contextually relevant ministries of healing and spiritual direction that remain accountable to established Christian practices and beliefs. Such ministries should be marked by sound theology, robust safeguarding, financial integrity, and effective church oversight. They should equip believers to discern the Spirit rather than depend exclusively on prophetic leaders. Although the study does not establish a direct causal link between the absence of *akwankyere* and declining membership, it identifies the issue as a significant pastoral challenge. It recommends pilot programmes, leadership training, youth and urban outreach, and further research on pastoral care and church commitment.

The need for accountable ministry becomes especially urgent in Ebenezer Tetteh Kpalam's article, which addresses the critical and often overlooked issue of child sexual abuse in Ghanaian society and churches, developing a pastoral response grounded in a relational understanding of the Trinity. Using Holland and Henriot's pastoral circle, the article brings lived experience into dialogue with Scripture, theological anthropology, and Trinitarian teaching. It argues that children and adults alike reflect the Trinity and possess equal dignity, thereby challenging abuses of power. The article presents the church as a healing community shaped by mutual respect, equality, connection, and supportive relationships. This vision is translated into practical measures for churches in Ghana, including child-centred theology, safeguarding policies, leadership training, advocacy, children's participation in protection efforts, survivor support, and collaboration with governmental and professional organisations. The article thus shows how relational Trinitarian theology can contribute to prevention, accountability, healing, and the transformation of church communities.

A related concern with the public consequences of Christian formation appears in the article by Samuel Nana Yaw Agyei, Marius Nel, and Michael Kumaglo, who examine the persistent disconnect between Ghana's strong Christian identity and unethical workplace behaviours such as bribery, favouritism, dishonest reporting, and abuse of power. Drawing on surveys and interviews with 50 Christians in Accra, the authors find that Christian faith can inspire honesty, diligence, courage, and accountability, yet peer pressure, economic hardship, job insecurity, and the normalisation of misconduct often undermine these commitments. The study argues that this "discipleship gap" cannot be reduced to individual hypocrisy; it also reflects the interaction of personal formation, church support, and workplace systems. The authors therefore propose a Pentecostal workplace ethic that integrates Spirit-led character, mentoring, communal accountability, and public witness, while calling churches and organisations to support and protect professionals who resist unethical practices. The article ultimately asks not only whether

Christians affirm the right values, but also whether churches and workplaces enable ethical decision-making when integrity carries high personal or professional costs.

Questions of integrity and accountability also shape Johnny Lartey Peprah and Patrick Tetteh Kudadjie's contribution to Pentecostal ecclesiology by exploring contemporary apostolic leadership through a nuanced interpretation of the New Testament. Through theological exegesis and engagement with Pentecostal and broader biblical scholarship, the authors distinguish Christ's unique apostleship, the foundational witness of the Twelve, Paul's distinct commission to the Gentiles, and the broader missionary role of other New Testament apostles. This framework maintains the singular revelatory authority of the foundational apostles while allowing contemporary apostolic ministry to be understood functionally. The authors propose criteria for discerning authentic apostolic leadership, including divine calling, spiritual gifts, missionary effectiveness, sacrificial service, ecclesial accountability, and fidelity to the gospel. In the Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic context, the article offers a biblically grounded framework for evaluating claims to apostolic titles and authority against the New Testament model of Christ-centred servanthood.

Abraham Nortey's article moves beyond a straightforward explanation of the conflict between Rachel and Leah by showing how an Akan cultural perspective can illuminate the narrative's continuing social and ethical significance. The study relates marital deception, favouritism, infertility stigma, competition for children, unequal marital access, and male passivity to comparable patterns in Akan polygynous households. In doing so, it treats African cultural experience as a substantive interpretive resource rather than a supplementary illustration. The article's significance lies in fostering a dynamic dialogue between text and context: Akan perspectives enrich the reading of the women's actions, while the biblical narrative critiques practices that marginalise wives, instrumentalise fertility, and perpetuate unequal affection. The result is an African-centred hermeneutic that is scholarly, culturally informed, pastorally relevant, and attentive to lived family structures.

The interplay of African identity, Christian faith, and changing social contexts continues in Fred Cudjoe Adade's article, which examines how African Pentecostal spirituality, cultural identity, and historical consciousness shape mission within the African diaspora in Southeast Asia, with particular attention to the Church of Pentecost in Thailand. Drawing on focus-group discussions and observations conducted in 2018 and 2024, he shows how Ghanaian languages, worship practices, music, dance, communal meals, family values, moral guidance, and leadership sustain migrants' faith and cultural heritage. The study nevertheless identifies limited engagement with Thai culture,

revealing a tension between cultural preservation and adaptation to a new environment. By placing African diasporic mission in conversation with the work of Afe Adogame, James Spickard, and Kwame Bediako, the article enriches Pentecostal mission studies and advocates a cross-cultural approach that preserves spiritual identity while fostering deeper, transformative relationships with local communities.

Taken together, the collection shows that Pentecostal theology and mission are most effective when anchored in thorough research, thoughtful self-examination, and proactive engagement with the real-world challenges facing both church and society. Across history, leadership, prophecy, safeguarding, ethics, biblical interpretation, apostolic ministry, and cross-cultural engagement, these articles encourage Christian communities to unite spiritual fervour with reflective theology, ethical accountability, and public responsibility. We hope this issue stimulates further research and constructive dialogue among scholars, church leaders, ministers, and students, while promoting practices that bear authentic witness to the gospel in Africa and beyond. We present these essays with the conviction that profound theological reflection can renew the church and sustain its faithful participation in God's mission.

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