

Book Review

Sadiri Joy Tira, ed., *From Womb to Tomb: Generational Missiology in the 21st Century and Beyond*

Reviewed by Sam George

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Tira, Sadiri Joy, ed. (2024). *From Womb to Tomb: Generational Missiology in the 21st Century and Beyond*. Edmonton, Canada: Sadiri Joy Tira/PageMaster Publishing, ISBN: 978-1-77354-585-1 (paperback) pp. 184, \$13.04, ISBN: 978-1-77354-586-8 (ebook) \$5.79.

The editor of this book, Dr. Sadiri Joy Tira, was my predecessor as a Catalyst of Diasporas for the Lausanne Movement. I was privileged to pick up the baton from him and run this race over the last ten years. I have known Dr. Tira in diverse settings, as our roles overlapped for a couple of years. Now as I am in the process of transitioning to the next band of leaders, I found that perusing this volume was timely and served well to remind me of the essential ethos of Christian leadership: develop the next generation of leaders.

This book is about intergenerational dynamics in mission leadership. It begins with biblical foundations of several Old and New Testament characters modeling generational transitions. Next the book explores missiological dimensions of intergenerational missions before showcasing a set of case studies spanning many generations and distinct struggles facing each. The book concludes with pastoral exhortations to pass on the legacy of faith and mission passion to others.

The central thrust of this volume is intergenerational missions—described as missions at the intersection of global intercultural, hybrid diasporas, and new technologies. Each generation must pass on the great heritage of faith they have inherited and avoid the mistakes of past generations. All Christian leaders must develop a lifelong perspective on leadership and be cognizant of generational discontinuities that will allow divergent styles and modes to serve God's greater purposes for every generation. Such a posture requires leaders to honor the past, embrace change, and focus on passing the baton of vibrant faith to the future, which will be leaders' greatest legacy.

The first section of the book brings out several intergenerational insights from biblical characters such as Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Ruth and Naomi, Paul and Timothy, and others—insights that are always pertinent to all leaders. One point that stood out for me is the aging of Christian institutions and models in the West along with the pressing need to train more leaders in the majority world, besides the generational diversity in organizations and the many challenges and opportunities that diversity offers. Learning and growing are no longer one-directional, from older to younger, but a two-way street. Older leaders must find mentors from younger generations and remain curious and teachable, even as they nurture other leaders.

Do not misinterpret the title of the book. Leaders are not in their positions of influence from the womb all the way to their tombs. Christian leaders do not cling to any chair or title for life. When a leader's identity and funding get wrapped up in a particular position or title, giving it away can be hard and create insecurity and uncertainty. Leaders are called to continually nurture other leaders and pass on the mantle of leadership to others, who will in turn do the same. In Lausanne circles, we joke around that our number one job is to replace ourselves—and we have five years to do that. We all serve voluntarily in leadership roles for a five-year term and can only serve a maximum of two terms.

This book reminds all Christian leaders of the importance of passing on the baton of faith and multiplying their efforts to nurture godly leaders who will be their greatest legacy. May we who are

blessed and tasked to be Christian leaders cry out with the Psalmist, “Do not forsake me, O God until I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.” (71:18).