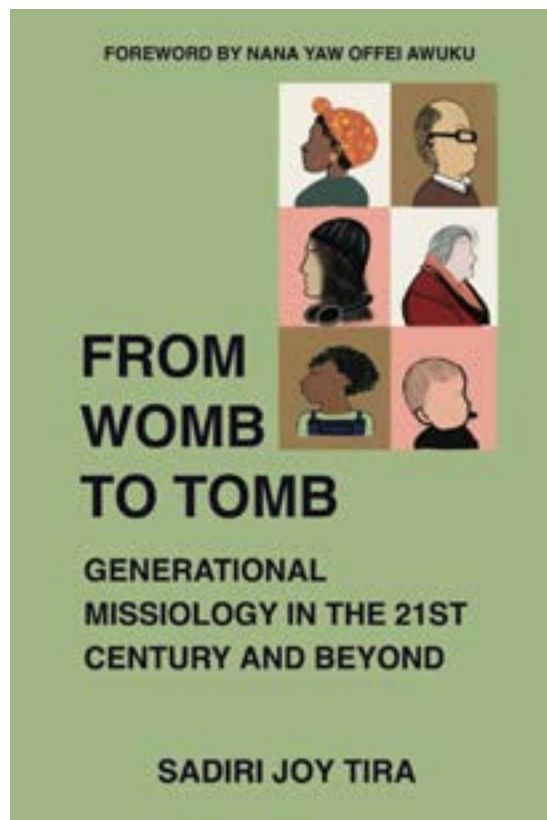


BOOK REVIEW

From Womb to Tomb: Generational Missiology in the 21st Century and Beyond by Sadiri Joy Tira

Chris Carr



About the Author:

Sadiri Joy Tira, DMiss, DMin, is the Diaspora Missiology Specialist at the Jaffray Centre for Global Initiatives, Ambrose University (Calgary, Alberta, Canada). Dr. Tira was the Founding Chairman of the Global Diaspora Network (2010-2015) and served as Senior Associate/Catalyst for Diasporas (2007-2019) of the Lausanne Movement. He studied Missiology and Theology from Canadian Theological Seminary, Taylor Seminary, Reformed Theological Seminary, and Western

About the Book

Tira's book addresses and now fills a previous intergenerationally-focused lacuna in the field of diaspora missiology he has helped lead through his connections with the Lausanne Movement and his many written books and journal articles:

Fifty years ago the major missiological discussion was UPG (Unreached People Group). This was followed by Urban/Mega Cities, 10/40 Window, Holistic Business as Missions, and Diaspora Missions. While all these remain, the contour of Global Missions, however, in the coming years is Generational and Polycentric missiology. The UPG are now in our own

circle. The growing population among the younger people and the aging population cannot be ignored by the Global Church. The gospel is for all people. (content introduction from Tira's text at https://www.amazon.ca/Womb-Tomb-Generational-Missiology-Century/dp/177354585X/ref=sr_1_2?)

The book has four sections. The first section introduces foundational biblical texts undergirding intergenerational mission. The second section examines the sociological, anthropological, theological, and missiological aspects of intergenerational mission. The third section reviews seven wide-ranging case studies reflecting intergenerational mission involving children, a Tsinoy Gen Z-er, cross-generational personal reflections, a Boomer, a diaspora Eurasian nonagenarian, and a closing word from Tira regarding intergenerational mission as modeled for him by his parents and grandparents in the Philippines. The fourth section contains a pastoral exhortation for passing on faith legacy to the next generations, with a warning to not abuse seniors or exclude them.

The first section of the book finds Tira addressing the umbrella of Biblical Contextual Intergenerational Missions, with sections nesting underneath it regarding how the Psalmic writers model

generational mission, the biblical foundations of intergenerational mission as reflected by the lives and leadership of Moses, Joseph, and Caleb, the unique intergenerational partnership story of Ruth and Naomi, and intergenerational mission exemplified in the New Testament by Jesus' and Paul's life-on-life modeling. This echoes David Hesselgrave's contrasting of incarnational vs. representational mission approaches.

The second section of the book brings an examination of the umbrella of sociological, anthropological, theological, and missiological aspects of intergenerational mission. Underneath this umbrella, Tira treats the need for engaging the next generation in God's global mission and bridging the gap for that by embracing intergenerational leadership in Christian ministry.

The third section of the book presents valuable relevant case studies of intergenerational missions:

1. God speaking in the lives of children
2. A Tsinoy Gen Z-er struggling with language, hybridity, and identity
3. A personal reflection about investing across generations
4. Reflections of a baby boomer regarding God's abiding faithfulness
5. Interview of a diaspora Eurasian nonagerian's experience from family tragedy to triumph
6. A centenarian's passing on of their personal legacy to further generations

The final section of the book comprises a pastoral exhortation that examines the need for intergenerational mission's passing on of faith legacy to subsequent generations, as well as a warning to neither abuse seniors nor exclude them from the family circle.

Tira ends his book with a conclusion, afterward, list of contributors, and appendix. Some observations about helpful insights and approaches in the book, plus a brief suggestion:

1. The second section of the book—an examination of sociological, anthropological, theological, and missiological aspects of intergenerational mission—provides an interesting symbiotic lense examining shared Next Gen (e.g., Gen Z and emerging Gen Alpha) and intergenerational leadership. This is likely more feasible in a local church context, but more problematic in a cross-cultural diaspora hybrid mission service setting due to significant lack of experience and understanding of inherent nuance that comes only via the rough and tumble of polycultural mission service immersion.
2. The use of case studies is invaluable, especially that of author Joy Tira with whom I've contributed to a separate book for which he served as editor (*Tides of Opportunity*). The case study approach adds a powerful personal touch

as he 'lands the plane' for the book. This approach moves the topic of intergenerational mission from the realm of mere theory into the crucible of experiential application.

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3. In a time of demographic fragmentation, tribalism, and public/private polarization in North America, Tira's book is a clarion call via which he skillfully forges an integration of the theoretical frameworks of diaspora, relational, and polycentric missiology into an actionable framework that embraces the entire Church.
4. A brief suggestion: though both this reviewer and Dr. Tira wholeheartedly accept the diaspora gateway UPG paradigm as biblical, valid, fitting, and relevant as a missiological worldview, nonetheless, in a future edition of his book, Dr. Tira should consider that a current maximum of only 3.6% of the global population fits the diaspora UPG model especially in the North American context. Some (e.g., Ted Esler's comment about this to the reviewer at the recent *Missio Nexus* conference in Louisville, Kentucky in September 2024) have criticized diaspora missiologists such as Tira and myself for giving too much attention and fuel to this perceived smaller demographic segment. It would be good for readers of a future version of Tira's book to be aware of this objection. Since only 3.6% of the world's population live outside of their birth country, how will the 'privileged' and 'distant' diaspora Christian communities work polycentrically not just in geography but among different groups within their own unreached people group or affinity group?



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