

Maritim, GC 2026, Review of *Youth Ministry After the Pandemic: a Practical Theology from the Global South*, KM Ndereba, *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 273-276

## Review

**Ndereba, Kevin Muriithi, *Youth Ministry After the Pandemic: a Practical Theology from the Global South*, Wipf & Stock Publishers, Eugene, Oregon: 2025, ISBN: 9781666756609, xiv, 159 pp.**

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Kevin Muriithi Ndereba's *Youth Ministry After the Pandemic* presents a compelling case that youth voices should be at the table of decision-making. He argues that theological circles must engage both practical and lived theology. Past colonial influences need to be met with a contemporary decolonized outlook. Across eleven compelling chapters, Ndereba articulates what various scholars have postulated for consideration in the post-COVID pandemic era.

Ndereba argues that youth ministry should include global voices, where in-depth theological reflections include church, society, and academy rather than being dichotomised, spiritualised, and privatised. He emphasises that, in the post-COVID era, young people are agents of change while navigating sociopolitical turmoil. Ndereba calls for theological reflection that incorporates contributions from African scholars, particularly from East and southern Africa. Their contributions are helpful for disenfranchised youth as they find meaning in a world of misperception. The growth of Christianity in the global South anticipates the inclusion of a broader worldview and the utilisation of the digital space for building bridges between theory and practice. Because, as Ndereba rightly notes, 'Christianity traverses cultures, contexts, and continents' (4).

Ndereba highlights the lack of comprehensive theological resources for faith formation in Africa, despite the fact that the continent's youth population is vast. Thus, he deliberately calls for an integrative approach to faith formation

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and for contextualised faith formation, rather than the compartmentalised manner in which it is often undertaken. Ndereba points out the significance ‘four theological voices’ to help understand youths’ implicit understanding and to guide our engagement in faith formation (18).

Ndereba insists that community is central to the transmission of faith. He underscores the importance of clan and tribe in faith transmission, reminding us that our heritage is rooted in the Abrahamic covenant. The family is vital in shaping youth spirituality. Authority is vested in different individuals with specific roles; therefore, the next generation is empowered to carry on the task of faith. Ndereba put it well that ‘communal linkages’ must not be neglected in the spiritual formation of youth in the post-pandemic era, and that spiritual formation needs to utilise an intergenerational approach and capitalise on ‘social capital’ for progressive spiritual influence (32-33).

Ndereba critiques Contemporary Christian Music for being shallow and suggests that worship should transcend ‘individualism, emotionalism, and performance to include prayer, singing, preaching, and the sacraments. Contextualising worship to engage youth popular culture must be thoughtful, relevant, and ultimately biblical’ (41). He notes that technology advancements are a necessary evil, influencing church protocols. Rather than demonise them, we should embrace and integrate them wisely, bearing in mind the tech-savviness of many youth. Digital ecclesiology, Ndereba argues, must be navigated with discernment, balancing cultural context with theological tradition. Despite its challenges, the digital space offers opportunities for missional engagement in the pastoral care of young people in the aftermath of the pandemic (54).

*Cura Pastoral*, or the care given to God’s people, is essential for youth ministry. According to Ndereba it must include empathy and listening, understanding, presence, and guidance. Practical care includes supporting grieving families, empowering youth, and addressing socio-economic needs. Ndereba advocates for narrative approaches that expand young people’s imagination and embed African epistemologies into pastoral frameworks, while leveraging digital platforms like WhatsApp and TikTok for ministry.

Ndereba posits that generational differences shape political outlooks; older generations tend to prioritise order and religion, while youth emphasise justice, equity, and freedom. Social media, serves as a mobilisation site for political moves by the youth because it provides a transformed place-based community with ‘networked individualism’ (77). Youth must be equipped for restorative justice and holistic discipleship that prepares them for societal transformation.

Ndereba argues that the faith-science debate is one major challenge youth face in the process of individuation. He goes on to categorise youth as nomads, prodigals, exiles, insiders, and outsiders, noting that identity is fluid across atheists, agnostics, and humanists. He calls for safe spaces where science-faith dialogue can flourish, countering dichotomous worldviews with practical theological approaches.

Environmental theology and climate justice require going beyond an emerging awareness of the challenges in ecology to being teachers, preachers, content creators, and mobilisers of environmental conservation. Ndereba articulates the need to develop a theology of environment, adopting the use of green energy, electric cars, etc., as advocated by youth voices. Indeed, we should give youth a chance to lead change.

In addition to ecological concern, Ndereba enunciates a triple pandemic facing youth: health, socio-cultural, and political challenges, and proposes ways that the ecclesial community is expected to offer solutions. Ndereba argues that economic justice must be pursued through theological reflection and institutional partnerships. Changing family dynamics, such as fatherlessness, single-parent homes, and child-headed households, demand renewed models of youth engagement. Advocacy, empowerment, and collaboration with state and private actors are essential to bridge gaps and link youth to opportunities.

Finally, Ndereba envisages a youth ministry that balances ‘spiritual and material realities, gospel presentation and gospel deeds’ (141). He calls for revitalised approaches that address sexual identity, unemployment, inequality, and ecological concerns. Faith remains the anchor amid shifting dynamics, and youth demographics are central to shaping the future.

This book is a must-read for all youth workers, particularly those in Africa, as we engage in practical theology. Youth ministry after the pandemic should embrace global perspectives, digital realities, ecological justice, and economic empowerment. Worship and discipleship should transcend the sacred-secular divide, equipping young people to be agents of restorative justice and holistic transformation. Restorative justice and worship must transcend cultures and generations.