

Should an indigenous African be ‘converted’ to do mission work in Africa? Insights from an inside story in South Africa.

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Abstract

Africans are increasingly becoming involved in various mission interests in their contexts. With reference to indigenous missionaries native to the land where they are serving, advantages include things such as less disruption with immigration requirements, linguistic and cultural aptitudes, and high-cost effectiveness. However, these advantages are not the same for indigenous Africans who are not native to the land where they serve. In relation to the latter this article discusses four ‘conversion experiences’ of a Congolese-born missionary at ‘Stinkwater’, a peripheral township in the City of Tshwane / South Africa. The article discusses the experiences that the missionary went through before he could “weave together” the story of Jesus with stories of people in this particular context. These experiences include: conversion from highlighting numbers to highlighting personal stories, conversion from teaching biblical scriptures to mediating the meaning of scriptures in a concrete context, conversion from church focussed to kingdom focussed and conversion from “one-size-fits-all” sermons to “tailor-made” sermons. This article unearths insights from a personal missionary journey which could be useful in the preparation of Indigenous workers who intend to work in context where they are not native to land. Finally, this article recommends and reinforces the need for the development of creative imagination in “weaving together” the story of Jesus with stories of people in a particular context.