A Pentecostal Conversion Story

Analyzing Born Again Rupture and Transformation in Muslim Zanzibar

Over the past decades the role of conversion has received increased scholarly attention; not the least within a growing bulk of anthropological work where the role of rupture within Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has been thoroughly examined in relation to migration, new moral lifestyles, culture as well as other religious traditions.\(^1\) The transformative outcome of a new life in Christ is yet sparsely studied in relation to Muslim majority settings and intra-continental migration in Africa.\(^2\)

This paper analyses conversion narrated by a Pentecostal from mainland Tanzania, temporarily living in the predominantly Muslim context of Zanzibar. By assessing the conversion narrative in relation to the Pentecostal migrant’s work in Zanzibar’s tourist sector, the paper’s analysis discusses the link between conversion, economic and social transformation. The contextual approach thus addresses how modes of identification with a wider Pentecostal narrative not only affects stances vis-à-vis the local Muslim society but also refigure the convert’s relations to the place of origin in mainland Tanzania.
