

“Living Sacrifice”: Human Bodies and Pentecostal/Charismatic Conversion Narratives of Prosperity

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To go through conversion in order to be a Born-again Christian is the primary entry point into the Evangelical/Pentecostal charismatic community. In the study of Pentecostalism for example the belief in “Christ as Savior” has been identified as the first of four theological themes emphasized in the theology of the movement. This study proposes to examine how the human body and the senses feature in Pentecostal/Charismatic conversion stories and testimonies as the main location of not just sin but also demonic activities. The transformation of life leading to renewal has often involved not just confession of sin but also the renunciation of certain demonic activities that may have contaminated the body keeping it bound to the works of the devil. In African traditions such contamination, it is believed, come from inappropriate sexual activity and participation in rituals of tradition through which the body’s orifices come to serve as demonic doorways of affliction. One way to appreciate the import of Pentecostal theology, I argue, is to understand the ways in which conversion relates to the human body and how it has been compromised in one’s previous life.