

Interface of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity and Islam in Tanzania – Contemporary Religious Antagonism through the Notion of Spiritual Warfare

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The paper discusses the contemporary Christian-Muslim religious tensions in Tanzania from the perspective of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity that has been on the rise for the past few decades. Religious tensions and conflicts in Tanzania have often been thought of in terms of inter- and intra-religious conflicts as well as conflicts between the Muslim population and the state. The present day religious interface is here situated within a short history of contemporary third wave Pentecostalism and the historically motivated Christian-Muslim antagonism in the country. It is argued that public popular discourse of religious tensions and politics on one hand and the individual and personal experiences of the born-again at the grass roots on the other can be best brought together and conceptualized in terms of the underlying notion of spiritual warfare. The analysis concentrates on the popular public discourse as well as personal experiences of individual born-again Christians, many of them Muslim converts in this case. It involves examining how the local ontological and spiritual categories emanating from Islam become incorporated in the Pentecostal-charismatic notions of spiritual warfare and the satanic in these specific socio-economic, historical and political circumstances thereby demonizing many of the Muslim practices and world views. This takes place in a context that is plural both in terms of ethnicity and religion. The paper is based on several months of fieldwork in Dar es Salaam as well as analysis of Christian audiovisual materials and other media products.