

## Publication

### Pentecostal improvement strategies : a comparative reading on african and south american pentecostalism

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The aim of this contribution is to explore the regional differences of religious life improvement strategies in African and South American Pentecostalism. Religious life improvement strategies can be defined as practices conducted within a religious environment that may (intentionally or not) contribute to the improvement of everyday life. Pentecostalism provides life improvement strategies to individuals seeking betterment by applying both secular and non-secular means that can help to advance quality of life and diminish suffering. For instance, Pentecostalism is thought to lead to new behavioral patterns among converts: costly and self-destructing practices such as drug and alcohol abuse, gambling, and domestic violence are suppressed allowing adherents to dedicate themselves to a more determined and healthy lifestyle. In order to determine potential differences in the life improvement strategies of African and South American Pentecostalism, the article provides a comparative reading of academic studies on Pentecostal life improvement strategies in sub-Saharan Africa and South America. The analysis shows that both strands of research, the "African" and "South American", name a variety of Pentecostal life improvement strategies. Although the range of strategies is the same, the emphases are different. While the South American strand stresses the impact of Pentecostalism on the self-discipline and the emotional and psychological wellbeing of its followers, the African strand emphasizes social outreach programs, prosperity gospel as well as the "breaking with the past" that new members experience. In each region, the configuration of Pentecostal life-improvement strategies appears to depend partly on the socio-cultural setting. However, it remains to be examined whether the differences in the academic literature correspond to empirical differences or are based on different research foci. As such, there is a need for more comparative research on Pentecostalism. This research can contribute to our understanding of contextual differences of Pentecostalism and the factors that cause these differences.

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