



Reading Guide

In this book we experiment with a new way of approaching religion. Considering the heterodox, perhaps even peculiar, structure and organization of this book, we offer here a short reading guide.

In many ways, this book can be read similarly to Julio Cortázar's famous novel *Hopscotch*: either in linear fashion, from page 1 until the end, or through alternative orders. For instance, this book can be read section by section: firstly, reading Part II as a 'collective ethnography' of sorts, in which the three authors offer empirical descriptions of their field sites and also experimentally engage with each other's fieldworks by detecting continuities, similarities and differences in regards to the different issues raised in Port Vila, Kiriwina and Luanda – the space we experimentally call in this book 'Pentecost'. This engagement appears in the book as a narrative strategy, but in fact is the result of countless workshops and round tables that the main authors of the book held in the periods in between their fieldworks, in which they presented their notes and ongoing findings, and discussed them critically, seeking points of connection and mutual inspiration. Secondly, the three chapters in Part III can be read together as theoretical engagements that stem from the underlying empirical work, and in which we address several relevant debates in the anthropology of Christianity, and Pentecostalism in particular. By confronting the ethnographic theories with the established debates, the authors explore three different avenues through which the prevailing interpretations could be somehow challenged and new ways of thinking about Christianity and Pentecostalism could be explored.

Finally, Part IV offers an assembly of debates, in which several authors, who have followed the research activities throughout the duration of the project and commented on previous versions of the chapters, reflect upon our results and discuss their potentials and limitations vis-à-vis the current debates in the field.

Alternatively, this book can be read 'vertically', following the individual itineraries 'suggested' by each of the main authors, from their ethnographic description in Part II into the theoretical debate that stems from it in Part III, and finally seeking the interlocution that the authors/readers of their chapters have produced in Part IV. For instance, the reader can choose to start reading Chapter 1, primarily authored by Annelin Eriksen, in which we observe a description of 'Pentecost' as a production of boundaries and 'protected spaces' in places like Port Vila. After interlocutions with Luanda and Kiriwina, Annelin Eriksen concludes that this social production implies a theory of personhood and the body. In Chapter 4 of Part III, she engages in a theoretical discussion concerning the problem of individualism in Christianity and the composite moral border work that it entails, suggesting a redefinition of how anthropologists can approach the debates. Finally, in Part IV, we can follow the reflections on this by Joel Robbins. Similarly, one can start with Chapter 2, move onto Chapter 5 and then onto the comments by Rio and Bertelsen, in order to focus explicitly on a discussion of wealth, waste and Pentecostalism. Or, one can choose to read Chapter 3, Chapter 6 and the comment by Meyer, to engage in a continuation, or even a redirection, of the debate about 'breaking with the past' (Meyer 1998) – a well-known debate for students of the anthropology of Christianity.

Finally, each of the three sections of the book can be read independently, as either ethnographic descriptions of Christian life in the global south (Part II), contemporary critical debates in the anthropology of Christianity (Part III) or a round table on possible advances in such debates (Part IV). Furthermore, the reader may choose to focus on the methodological aspects of the book, by engaging with the introduction and the comment by Candea in Part IV of the book.

Reference

- Meyer, B. 1998. 'Make a Complete Break with the Past: Memory and Post-colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28(3): 316–49.