



Hans Olsson. *Jesus for Zanzibar: Narratives of Pentecostal (Non-)Belonging, Islam, and Nation.* Leiden: Brill, 2019. xvi + 291 pp. \$192.00, e-book, ISBN 978-90-04-41036-7.

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In recent years, the study of Pentecostalism has increased rapidly. This tendency can be explained by the increasing role of religion in human lives and growth of Pentecostal churches around the world. This book by Hans Olsson is a case in point.

It is important to emphasize that this book is only a first step toward studying Pentecostalism in Zanzibar in particular and Christianity on the island in general. Furthermore, this study is not just about Pentecostalism; it is also about more general questions related to the past, present, and future of Zanzibar. This book is not only about religion; it is also about sociocultural and political changes taking place in Zanzibar nowadays. Olsson raises questions about relations between Islam and Christianity in Zanzibar, and between Zanzibar and the mainland, and gives answers to these questions using different people's life stories.

Olsson shows that there are two distinct discourses of historical memory of key events and moments in Zanzibarian history, including Omani rule, the slave trade, the abolition of slavery, British colonialism, Zanzibarian revolution, and the creation of the Tanzanian Union. More closely, the author deals with the issue of the Union and the issues it has produced. He shows that all of them have a deep historical background, but they are very acute for political discourses of present-day

Zanzibar. These two historical discourses can be identified as Zanzibarian and continental. Olsson discusses how these discourses were created in the course of history and how they manifest themselves at present, especially during elections.

Olsson shows that the growth of Pentecostalism in Zanzibar has close links with labor migration from the mainland, which increased in the 1980s with the liberalization of Zanzibar's economy. According to statistics about Christians in Zanzibar that Olsson provides, approximately 22,000 people currently living in the Zanzibar archipelago (two thirds on Unguja) are Christians (p. 55). Today, the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches remain the largest Christian denominations, with 13,000 and 2,500 members respectively, while Pentecostals number around 4,500 (2,700 attending Tanzania's Assemblies of God's [TAG] services). The largest Pentecostal church is TAG's City Christian Center (CCC), which has a weekly attendance of 800–900 people. He also highlights the CCC's increased presence on the island—from 35 to over 900 members in the last twenty years (p. 58).

Olsson shows that Pentecostalism is perceived as an external agent of invasion from the mainland. The radical UAMSO ("Awakening") political party, for instance, rioted in 2012 against not only the ruling CCM (Chama cha Mapinduzi, "Revolutionary") party, but also the CCC. Olsson shows that

some people perceive Pentecostalism as a threat to Islamic culture on the island in particular and the future of the Muslim religion in general. This view contrasts sharply with widespread perceptions of Anglicanism and Catholicism, which are thought to be domesticated because they have absorbed the values of *Ustaarabu* (in a general sense the term means civilization, but in everyday life *Ustaarabu* means to be a good and kind person, to not misbehave, and to dress and speak properly). Olsson documents that adherents of the CCC do not live like Anglicans and Catholics traditionally do. Pentecostals are perceived by Zanzibarians as not only representatives of the mainland and supporters of the Union, but also as representatives of Western culture and globalization. Olsson stresses that followers of the CCC do not try to assimilate into Zanzibarian culture. Rather, they declare their Pentecostal identity through public religious practices (e.g., baptism in the ocean) and unique clothes. Pentecostal men, for instance, wear the t-shirts of the Tanzanian national team instead of the t-shirts of the Zanzibar national team. They also do not wear *cofia*, the traditional Zanzibarian head dress of Muslim people. Additionally, Pentecostal women wear trousers and do not cover their heads, making them easily recognizable in crowds. The rapid growth of Pentecostalism is a matter of concern for those people, especially older adults, who honor the traditional way of life.

Olsson's book is based on field evidence and offers different life stories of individuals who have joined CCC. These stories help us better understand the social and religious landscape of contemporary Zanzibarian society. He also considers the important work the CCC does in Zanzibar, how it helps newcomers find moral support and financial assistance. When analyzing relations between members of the CCC and Muslims on the island, Olsson pays little attention to the differences in the relations between members of the CCC and those of various Muslim denominations (Sunni, Shia, Ibadi) which are present on the island, and between the CCC Pentecostals and older Christian

denominations (Anglican and Catholic). Olsson could also have explored more closely the relationship between the CCC and the mainland's central authorities to help us better understand what the mainland thinks about the presence of Pentecostalism on the island.

In sum, Hans Olsson's book sheds a light on the cultural and sociopolitical transformation in Zanzibar society, and lays a solid foundation for future research on Christianity in Zanzibar. This book will be required reading for all those interested in religion and politics in contemporary Africa.

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