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## **WITH JESUS IN PARADISE? PENTECOSTAL MIGRANTS IN CONTEMPORARY ZANZIBAR**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article explores the quest to become ‘saved’ Christians among contemporary Pentecostal migrants from mainland Tanzania in Zanzibar. Analyzing a set of techniques and processes applied in developing and keeping faith reveals high levels of suspicion and doubt connected to the perceived presence of evil in the Zanzibari environment, linked to a fear of losing salvation. With Christian minorities recently having their premises attacked in connection to socio-political animosities in the predominantly Muslim setting of Zanzibar, the case in this article highlights how the context of violence is negotiated in Pentecostal modes of suspicion towards the other, while at the same time bolstering spiritual growth. This illustrates how a Pentecostal ethos intermingles with, and provides migrants with ways of interpreting, the contemporary setting in which religious belonging is at the fore in present-day calls for Zanzibari political sovereignty and inclusive Union politics.

### **Key words:**

Pentecostalism, migration, East Africa, Islam, religious practice

### **INTRODUCTION**

On one of the white coral beaches in Unguja, the major island in the Zanzibar archipelago located some 30 km from the Tanzanian coastline, an excited but nervous group of people have gathered to move forward and confirm a life with Jesus. Waiting in lines, some tremble, terrified to enter the water. Nonetheless, supported by fellow Christians chanting hymns, one person after another descends into the turquoise water where Pastor Dixon Kaganga and a church elder patiently await them. Two hours later, 37 Christians have confirmed their commitment to the City Christian Centre (CCC), Zanzibar’s largest Pentecostal church, and the major outreach of the Tanzania Assemblies of God (TAG) in Zanzibar. It is a diverse group of people with one thing in common: Zanzibar is approached from a point of alienation rather than being their place of origin. They are migrants (or children of migrants), primarily from mainland Tanzania,

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the reviewers at *Pneuma*, Professor Amos Yong, Professor Michael McClymond, and Dr. Päivi Hasu, as well as Professor Mika Vähäkangas and members of the World Christianity and interreligious relations seminar at Lund University, for commenting on earlier drafts of this article.

coming to Zanzibar in search of a better life (*kutafuta maisha*)—a large number of them taking work in a rapidly expanding tourist economy. Many have struggled with obstacles on their path to a desired relocation in Zanzibar, a destination that promises economic prosperity as well as a life in *uzima*.<sup>2</sup> To build faith (*kunongeza imani*) in a Pentecostal church is the preferred option for many of these migrants and is therefore also the driving force behind the growth of the CCC from a small Christian fellowship into one of Zanzibar's major Christian congregations.

The East African archipelago of Zanzibar has historically been a major hub for economic trade and cultural exchange between Africa, India, and the Arabic peninsula, generating a multifaceted socio-cultural setting. Here, Islam has dominated the religious landscape for centuries, working as a unifier in accommodating diverse trajectories of ethnic belonging. Despite the islands' social composition often being explained in terms of a cultural melting pot where peace and tolerance reign, the islands have had their fair share of social contestations and turmoil over the centuries. Slave trade, slave labor and periods of Arab and European colonial rule all contributed to social tensions that peaked in a violent revolution in 1964. This has often been depicted as an African overthrow of the Arab elite which, in conjunction with the establishment of a Union with Tanganyika the same year, shifted the archipelago's political outlook from the Indian Ocean towards the African continent. Since the 1980s onwards, the islands have gone through heavy economic liberalization and polity reforms not only providing space for a booming tourist industry along the islands white coral beaches but also steering the semi-autonomous archipelago into multi-party politics.<sup>3</sup>

In 2012, a wave of violence directed at Christians and the premises of Christian churches surfaced in connection to rising protests directed against Zanzibar's role and future in the Union (i.e. Tanzania). In this tense socio-political context of anti-Union sentiments Zanzibari nationalists began to depict Christian mainland migrants as signifiers of the Union's presence in the archipelago. The CCC church was among several churches attacked following animosities connected to large public demonstrations organized by the popular Islamic propagation organization and anti-union proponent Jumuiya ya Uamsho na Mihadhara na Kiislam (popularly known as Uamsho) against Zanzibar's role in the Union in May 2012.<sup>4</sup>

This present study's focus on Christian newcomers to Zanzibar not only highlights ways in which Pentecostal belonging and modes of practice intersect with contemporary trajectories of labor migration within the context of the United Republic of Tanzania, but also draws attention to how contemporary Pentecostals negotiate a local, Muslim-dominated cultural setting. The relations between African Pentecostalism and migration have

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<sup>2</sup> *Uzima* is translated as life, vitality, and healthiness but implies a life in wholeness, completeness, harmony, and adulthood (to be *mtu mzima*, a grown up person, includes having children and being healthy).

<sup>3</sup> See for instance Randall L. Pouwels, "The East African Coast, C. 780 to 1900 C.E.," in *History of Islam in Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000); Abdul Sheriff, "Race and Class in the Politics of Zanzibar," *Africa Spectrum* 36, no. 3 (2001); Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> On the riots in May 2012 see 'Rioters torch churches in Z'bar' *The Daily News* 28/5 -2012 (Accessed 2012-06-11 <http://www.dailynews.co.tz/index.php/local-news/5610-rioters-torch-churches-in-z'bar>); 'Destruction as rioters run amok in Zanzibar,' *The Citizen* 28/5- 2012 (accessed 2012-05-30 <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/news/4-national-news/22687-destruction-as-rioters-run-amok-in-zanzibar.html>).

been extensively approached from transnational perspectives<sup>5</sup> but the connections between Pentecostal Christianity and migration within Africa and its religiously diverse national settings have been sparsely studied and still lack empirical research.<sup>6</sup> Even though Pentecostal practices of demonization<sup>7</sup> have posed concerns regarding the prospect of peace in inter-religious settings<sup>8</sup> and harmonious Pentecostal relations with local and traditional practices,<sup>9</sup> research on local Pentecostal engagements with Islam in Africa have, so far, primarily focused on the Nigerian context<sup>10</sup> and the West African fringe,<sup>11</sup> with few cases from South/East Africa.<sup>12</sup> This aim of this study is to bridge that gap.

When approaching processes of Pentecostal growth in Zanzibar, issues of migration, mainland belonging, and the relationship with Islam all become part and parcel of what CCC members refers to as the quest of remain in salvation (*kuweka wokovu*). In order to help their members cope with life in predominantly Muslim Zanzibar (where 97% of a population of approximately 1.3 million adhere to the Muslim faith),<sup>13</sup> the CCC church places

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<sup>5</sup> E.g. the special issue on 'African Pentecostalism in diaspora,' *PentecoStudies* 9, no. 1 (2010); Afe Adogame and James V. Spickard, *Religion Crossing Boundaries: Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora*, Religion and the Social Order (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010); Frieder Ludwig and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Christian Presence in the West : New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*(Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2011); Michael Wilkinson, *Global Pentecostal Movements : Migration, Mission, and Public Religion* (Leiden: BRILL, 2012); Claudia Währisch-Oblau, *The Missionary Self-Perception of Pentecostal/Charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South in Europe : Bringing Back the Gospel*(Leiden: Brill, 2009); J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "'To the Ends of the Earth': Mission, Migration and the Impact of African-Led Pentecostal Churches in the European Diaspora," *Mission Studies* 29, no. 1 (2012); Galia Sabar, "Witchcraft and Concepts of Evil Amongst African Migrant Workers in Israel," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue canadienne des études africaines* 44, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>6</sup> But see H. Englund, "Ethnography after Globalism: Migration and Emplacement in Malawi," *American Ethnologist* 29, no. 2 (2002); Rijk van Dijk, "Localisation, Ghanaian Pentecostalism and the Stranger's Beauty in Botswana," *Africa* 73, no. 04 (2003); Marc Sommers, "Young, Male and Pentecostal: Urban Refugees in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 14, no. 4 (2001).

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on Pentecostal aspects of demonization and its political implications see Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar : Pentecostalism and Political Theology*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), pp. 129-34.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Rosalind I. J. Hackett, "Discourses of Demonization in Africa and Beyond," *Diogenes* 50, no. 3 (2003); Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 14-15.

<sup>9</sup> Birgit Meyer, "'Make a Complete Break with the Past.' Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. 3 (1998).

<sup>10</sup> E.g. Matthews A. Ojo, "Pentecostal Movements, Islam and the Contest for Public Space in Northern Nigeria," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007); Asonzeh F. K. Ukah, "Contesting God: Nigerian Pentecostals and Their Relations with Islam and Muslims," in *Global Pentecostalism: Encounters with Other Religious Traditions*, ed. Daudi Westerlund (London, New York: I B Tauris, 2009); "Born-Again Muslims: The Ambivalence of Pentecostal Response to Islam in Nigeria," in *Fractured Spectrum : Perspectives on Christian-Muslim Encounters in Nigeria*, ed. Akintunde E. Akinade (New York: Peter Lang, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> E.g. Barbara MacGowen Cooper, *Evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sahel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Tomas Sundnes Drønen, *Pentecostalism, Globalisation, and Islam in Northern Cameroon : Megachurches in the Making?* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); P. J. Laurent, "Transnational and Local Transformations: The Example of the Church of Assemblies of God in Burkina Faso," in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, ed. André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (London: Hurst & Company, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> For instance Harri Englund, "From Spiritual Warfare to Spiritual Kinship: Islamophobia and Evangelical Radio in Malawi," in *Christianity and Public Culture in Africa*, ed. Harri Englund (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Religious demographics in Zanzibar and Tanzania are a politically tense issue and not part of the official census. Numbers provided, however, always state an overwhelming Muslim majority in Zanzibar, M.A. Bakari,

emphasis on disseminating a set of routines that help adherents practice an appropriate way of life in relation to the local culture. While some of the suggested routines are pragmatic, dealing, for instance, with how to approach Islamic holidays such as Ramadan, the church focuses on guiding its members into becoming strong, mature Christians, highlighting that conversion is not just a single event but an ongoing praxis of permanent ratification that affirms and deepens faith over time.<sup>14</sup>

In her study of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, Ruth Marshall stresses that the continuous internalization of faith over time – a process whereby certain aesthetics, moral and ritual behavior, a strong work ethic, and praying techniques are appropriated and embodied – produces an ethos that not only empowers engagement with the world but also, paradoxically, contains the risk of losing one's salvation.<sup>15</sup> This observation draws attention to the indwelling doubt and suspicion of the ability of the individual to withstand forces connected to the dominion of the devil which are inherent to the cultivation of faith. The oscillation between confidence in God's power to generate growth on the one hand, and anxiety over the presence of evil dwelling inside the self and in others on the other, was repeatedly stressed in talks with CCC members. As doubt, suspicion, and skepticism are largely overlooked in research dealing with the construction and maintenance of faith,<sup>16</sup> this current work focuses on how these elements help situate Pentecostal migrants in present-day Zanzibar society. Central to this project is an assessment of the quests of members of the CCC to retain salvation in a context where current Christian discourses of growth increasingly intersect with (re)emerging politics of belonging in which ethno-national (Zanzibari and 'mainland' Tanzanian) and religious (Muslim and Christian) identities intermingle.<sup>17</sup>

Based on ethnographic research in Zanzibar,<sup>18</sup> this article presents how CCC members approach the Zanzibar context and the dangers they perceive to be present in the islands. After outlining the hazards and their connection to the spiritual realm I turn to the techniques applied by members of the CCC as a means of transforming selves into strong, resistant, and spiritually mature Christians. This draws further attention to the tension between the personal empowerment gained through tapping into God's power and modes of doubt related to presence of evil. By assessing modes of Pentecostal doubt and suspicion in the framework of violence, the case of the CCC reveals examples of how Pentecostal interpretations of the world are contextually produced in relation to migration and Islam. This discloses not

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"Religion, Secularism, and Political Discourse in Tanzania: Competing Perspectives by Religious Organizations," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 8, no. 1 (2012): p. 7. See also Michael F. Lofchie, *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.1965), p. 72 for statistics based on the last official census where religious affiliation was sampled.

<sup>14</sup> Lewis Ray Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Marshall, *Political Spiritualities : The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*, pp. 128-31.

<sup>16</sup> But see for instance Andreas Bandak, "Problems of Belief: Tonalities of Immediacy among Christians of Damascus," *Ethnos* 77, no. 4 (2012); Matthew Engelke, *A Problem of Presence : Beyond Scripture in an African Church*, *The Anthropology of Christianity*; 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 102-08.

<sup>17</sup> For an historical background to the contemporary context see Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones : Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*. especially pp. 282-302.

<sup>18</sup> The analysis builds on ethnographic research carried out in Zanzibar in 2010 and 2012 at the CCC church. During the seven months of field research in total (divided into three periods) I have conducted 25 qualitative (recorded) interviews, two focus-group interviews, and engaged in numerous periods of participant observation, in addition to many chats and personal communications with members of the CCC.

only how a Pentecostal ethos intermingles with mainland migrants' experiences of Zanzibar, but also how the search for a good life, connected to migration patterns, intersects with Pentecostal narratives of growth, and so also impacts on the complex political context in the United Republic of Tanzania.

### HAZARDS IN ZANZIBAR

'Life here in Zanzibar is hard' (*maisha hapa Zanzibar ni magumu*), was something that was often claimed by members of the CCC in relation to their day-to-day experience of life on Unguja. While the nature of personal hardships and individual goals differed among members of the CCC, many share the experience of being an outsider (both in terms of religious and ethno-national belonging), and the greater proportion of daily struggles are related to securing an income, not only for the individual migrant in Zanzibar but also in order to provide for families and kin back home on the mainland. The pressure to succeed and deliver is high in light of the task of finding one's footing in a new social setting; coming from a rural location in mainland Tanzania to Zanzibar town (a common trajectory) is often an overwhelming culture shock. Resonating with this disjuncture, many CCC members stress that becoming saved in Zanzibar helped instigate a break from a previous life where income was largely spent on alcohol consumption or worldly pleasures. Becoming saved thus becomes a way of gaining control and structure in a new life in an uncertain setting and, while it may comprise a further rupture with the past,<sup>19</sup> becoming saved primarily deals with the local context of Zanzibar and a life perceived to be under the dominion of evil influences. Also worthy of note is that, in the case of CCC members, the structures of life developed in a new economic environment often contribute to reestablishing ties to the family of origin on mainland Tanzania. Such restorations of relationships with kin back home<sup>20</sup> highlights how Pentecostal belonging in Zanzibar becomes a source of family reconciliation, thereby shedding light on Pentecostal migrants' diverse ties to different localities.<sup>21</sup>

Zanzibar is, therefore, often regarded as a complex mixture of socio-economic opportunities and socio-cultural estrangement. On the one hand, the breezy island atmosphere provides a setting away from the stress, heat, and fuss of urban centers such as Dar es Salaam: the major site of rural-urban migration in Tanzania and the hub through which many of Zanzibar's labor migrants pass. Yet, on the other hand, the struggle to find a job and earn money in Zanzibar is intrinsically linked to negotiations with the socio-cultural influence of Islam, and local expectations that incomers should conform and adapt to the destination culture.<sup>22</sup> This is

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<sup>19</sup> E.g. Meyer, "'Make a Complete Break with the Past.' Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse."; Joel Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004).

<sup>20</sup> Harri Englund, in "Cosmopolitanism and the Devil in Malawi," *Ethnos* 69, no. 3 (2004): p. 307, also stresses this aspect. See also M. Lindhardt, "If You Are Saved You Cannot Forget Your Parents': Agency, Power, and Social Repositioning in Tanzanian Born-Again Christianity," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 40, no. 3 (2010).

<sup>21</sup> For a similar assessment with different conclusions see Sabar, "Witchcraft and Concepts of Evil Amongst African Migrant Workers in Israel."

<sup>22</sup> Zanzibar has a long history of adopting diverse trajectories of belonging, yet Islamic moral values have been a major point of unification in forming a common cosmopolitan identity in a 'melting pot' of transcultural

further complicated by the political climate and tensions over Zanzibar's role in the Union with mainland Tanzania,<sup>23</sup> while political discourses on Christian, mainland, and migrant identity ascriptions increasingly intersect and add to the already complex situation. Pressures, therefore, pile up from multiple directions: economic expectations from home, social pressure to conform to Zanzibari customs, and political objectifications, while, in addition to all this, life in Zanzibar is viewed as risky. In response many search for a community to provide them with a safe haven. A young member of the CCC church, for instance, who left Dar es Salaam some years back in search of job opportunities, stressed the need to find a church and a community of fellow believers in order not to lose her footing and grasp on life (*potea maisha*).<sup>24</sup>

From a Pentecostal studies perspective, the apprehensive and cautious views of Zanzibar on the part of the migrants could be said to follow a general Pentecostal worldview. Like many Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians globally, CCC members approach the world in terms of duality:<sup>25</sup> a battle between good and evil forces, with whole nations, societies and individuals seen to be under the influence of the devil.<sup>26</sup> The world is crammed with the potential pitfalls of immoral and sinful behavior, such as heavy drinking and smoking marijuana. Falling in love with the wrong person and/or engaging in temporary sexual relations (thereby leading to the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS) is yet another danger. Moreover, there are constant pressures/temptations to convert to Islam, which is often connected to promises of good jobs, marriage, and material benefits.<sup>27</sup> CCC members regard all these hazards as being linked to evil forces at work and the risk of allowing spiritual beings to take possession of both body and mind.

The scope of such spiritual beings is traditionally broad along the Swahili coast where spirits are categorized into subgroups: *mapepo* (spirits, demons), *majini* (Muslim spirits), *mashetani* (spirits, demon), and *mizimu* (ancestral spirits), among others.<sup>28</sup> While many of these spiritual entities have traditionally been considered neutral and able to encompass both good and evil, members of the CCC tend to regard all as being part of the realm of the devil, collected together under the concept of *nguvu za giza* (powers of darkness). Even though *nguvu za giza* are prominent all over the East African interior, Zanzibar is seen as the "storage house" for the

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interactions, with the concept of *ustaarabu* (being civilized) an important element of this. See Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. Kjersti Larsen, "Change, Continuity and Contestation: The Politics of Modern Identities in Zanzibar," in *Swahili Modernities: Culture, Politics, and Identity on the East Coast of Africa*, ed. Pat Caplan and Farouk Topan (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2004), pp. 123-24; Bernadeta Killian, "The State and Identity Politics in Zanzibar: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation in Tanzania," *African Identities* 6, no. 2 (2008): p. 112.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Yemina, Zanzibar town, 2012-11-05. All names used are pseudonyms except those of public persons, such as leaders of the communities studied. Quoted material is translated from Swahili by the author if not stated otherwise.

<sup>25</sup> A. Droogers, "Globalisation and Pentecostal Success" in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, ed. André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (London: Hurst & Company, 2001), pp. 55-56.

<sup>26</sup> Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," pp.127-29; Englund, "Cosmopolitanism and the Devil in Malawi."

<sup>27</sup> Interviews with Raheli 2012-10-30; Robert 2012-11-08; Yemina 2012-11-05.

<sup>28</sup> Kjersti Larsen, "Morality and the Rejection of Spirits. A Zanzibari Case," *Social Anthropology* 6, no. 1 (1998): p. 62; Magnus Echtler, "Changing Rituals: The New Year's Festival in Makunduchi, Zanzibar, since Colonial Times" (PhD University of Bayreuth, 2008), pp. 115-17.

entire Tanzanian nation, “a place controlled by demons.”<sup>29</sup> This perception is widespread among CCC members who attribute the presence of spirits in Zanzibar to Islam—Zanzibar, where it faces the mainland coast, being the Islamic center of Tanzania—and to Islamic traditions of *jins*.<sup>30</sup> Relations between Muslims and spirits are seen in terms of cultivation (*kufuga mapepo, majini*) with spirits being nurtured as a strategy to attract people to Islam (mosques are regarded the centers for such cultivation).<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the presence of spirits is also linked to the water surrounding the islands. While some stress that spirits were brought to Zanzibar by Arab colonizers and now roam the islands after being stranded when many Arabs were forced to leave Zanzibar after the revolution in the 1960s, others emphasize that the ocean is the very gateway to the spiritual world.<sup>32</sup> Traveling to Zanzibar by sea is generally considered to be risky by people from the mainland, not only because of a number of boat accidents occurring in recent years,<sup>33</sup> but also due to the immense number of spirits perceived to be present in the sea. To reside in a setting where the socio-geographical sphere is understood within a paradigm of spirits and evil powers produces uncertainties and demands preventive strategies. The following section discusses how members of CCC engage with the presence of evil through a number of techniques that they consider of utmost importance to preclude evil taking control over their lives.

#### FAITH TECHNIQUES AND THE POWER OF GOD

“I try to overcome the trials present here by loving Jesus”, Robert explains while narrating the story of his life. 20 years have passed since he left southern Tanzania as a young man. Robert is convinced that his love for Jesus has provided his ongoing success in life, in other words work, a healthy family and a decent house. His faith is lived and manifested in a set of techniques that help him through his daily tribulations, though his continuing commitment to Jesus is guided by a process of choosing good over evil. Related to this, Robert stresses the importance of practicing self-awareness (*kujitambua*) in order to be able to build faith (*kuongeza imani*) and so also expand his spiritual character (*kukua kiroho*).<sup>34</sup>

This aspect of self-awareness was picked up by another CCC member, Raheli, a Zanzibar-born businesswoman in her early forties, whose Roman Catholic parents migrated from mainland Tanzania to Zanzibar in the 1960s. Growing up in Zanzibar, Raheli was the only Christian in her class and felt alienated as a result. After being healed in a deliverance session at the CCC church following a long period of sickness, Raheli decided to follow Jesus and live a life in salvation (*maisha ya wokovu*). While elaborating on the character of a person of God

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Daudi, Zanzibar town 2012-10-27.

<sup>30</sup> Robert W. Lebling, *Legends of the Fire Spirits : Jinn and Genies from Arabia to Zanzibar* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 202-07.

<sup>31</sup> Interviews with Luka 2012-10-05; Imanueli 2012-11-11.

<sup>32</sup> Interviews with John 2012-10-25; Imanueli 2012-11-11.

<sup>33</sup> Two larger ferry accidents took place in 2011 and 2012. See ‘Scores drowned in Zanzibar ferry sinking’ Al-Jazeera 10-9-2011 (accessed 2014-01-03

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/09/201191072355624359.html>)

and ‘Dozens killed in Zanzibar ferry disaster’ *Al-Jazeera* 19/7-2012 (accessed 2014-01-03

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/07/201271814217312822.html>).

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Robert 2012-11-08.

(*mtu wa Mungu*), and the actions connected to maintaining a state of being saved, Raheli stresses the need to follow the instructions given by the pastor. Participation in the church's weekly schedule, bible study groups, the women's group, and prayer meetings, is also important, while fasting and seeking God through prayer is something which is required. She summarizes the obligations by stating;

If you live the whole week without at least two times engaging yourself in these things your spiritual character will die (*kiroho chako kitakufa*)... if you come here [to the church] people will enable you [to move forward] because God has given them [strength]... because if you stay at home during the week without doing God's thing the development will be bad.<sup>35</sup>

In Raheli's statement commitment to 'God's thing' carries a collective dimension. Part of this communal aspect lies in the close ties forged in local cell groups located across Zanzibar town's many neighborhoods. Raheli explains that such structures empower her to develop and confront forces that try to lead her astray as an individual. She describes how she, 10 o'clock every night, engages in strategic prayers to fight and confront strange habits of an immoral character (*tabia za ajabu ajabu*)<sup>36</sup> that might dwell inside her, and habits connected with her past which could slowly re-emerge and lead her astray. Against such fears Raheli uses the weapon (*silaha*) of prayer which put her in communication with God and gives her the strength to continue to go forward. Hence, Raheli explains, it is only the work a person has invested in doing Godly things (*vitu vya kimungu*)—praying, fasting, being part of Christian fellowships, reading the Bible, following the instructions of more mature Christians etc.—that safeguards her salvation. "If you devote yourself to these things you will be able to continue. You won't fall."<sup>37</sup>

Raheli points out two major techniques applied as a means to 'maintain' a life in salvation; (1) adherence to communal fellowships; and (2) the ongoing practice of prayer. Both techniques are seen as important in order to connect with, and also receive, the power of God. The environment of saved Christians provides Raheli with guidance and strength to take on her individual battles against peculiar habits (*tabia za ajabu ajabu*) which dwell within. Her heavy emphasis on communal activities signals that being saved is a continual, but shaky, process on the journey towards spiritual maturity, and offers evidence of the insecurity and doubt felt about the individual's ability to carry out the task alone.<sup>38</sup> With the risk of losing salvation always present, the danger of negative impact from evil shapes CCC members' daily routines as well as their social interactions with those not yet saved. Hence, Robert, like Raheli, stresses the communal aspect of close ties to fellow born again Christians coupled with avoidance of *makundi mabaya* (bad groups) that do not engage with God. "I struggle to avoid such groups, because every human being is the other alike, and a human is weak. If I introduced myself to such things, I would be attracted." Once again, distrust in the human condition surfaces. Continuing, Robert, like Raheli, also mentions how commitment to prayer and being a prayer

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Raheli 2012-10-30.

<sup>36</sup> *Tabia za ajabu ajabu* generally implies actions of immoral character in Swahili. (*ajabu* lit. miracle, wonder, surprise). Raheli mentioned the examples of being a thief or an adulterer in explaining the concept.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Raheli 2012-10-30.

<sup>38</sup> T. M. Luhmann, "How Do You Learn to Know That It Is God Who Speaks?," in *Learning Religion: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Daudi C. Berliner and Ramon Sarró (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), p. 101.

warrior (*mwombaji*) helps him to bind (*funga*), confront, and thereby overcome external influences.<sup>39</sup>

To pray is therefore vital in order to tap into the power of God. But prayer is also a technique that shapes as well as controls, an act of characterization of the consciousness with self-awareness utilized as a means for safeguarding ongoing spiritual progress. Such spiritual maturity is, nonetheless, simultaneously dependent on communication with God, and remaining in a state where the strength of God descends upon the Christian. Hence, prayer becomes a method through which Raheli and CCC members “learn to feel God in their bodies and minds.”<sup>40</sup> Practicing self-awareness through prayers are thus part of an appropriation of a Pentecostal way of life, which Marshall, building on Foucault, terms a subjectivation to a discursive practice, where moral behavior, self-discipline and commitment to *vitv vya Mungu* (Godly things) fashions Pentecostal subjects.<sup>41</sup>

Prayer and keeping the right company facilitate the foundation on which Robert and Raheli may both maintain a life in salvation and also act to take control of and bind forces that might steer them in the wrong direction; a like-minded community is needed to come closer to God and God’s power through prayer. This highlights a tension in CCC members’ work on their salvation that corresponds to that of Pentecostal churches more generally, where the emphasis placed on miraculous, unmediated revelation and affectivity reveals a constant oscillation between two levels of interpreting the ‘fruits of salvation:’<sup>42</sup> that is, on the one hand, the ability of individuals to adhere to techniques of personal edification, versus, on the other, intervention by supernatural power that somewhat dictates one’s fate in life—be it through divine grace or powers of darkness.<sup>43</sup> Let us therefore now turn to the elements of doubt that accompany Pentecostal processes of sanctification.

#### **DOUBT AND THE PRESENCE OF EVIL**

As highlighted above, dealing with fragments of doubt related to the malevolent presence of evil is integral to CCC members’ learning to grow into victorious and spiritually mature Christians. This underlines both the risk of losing salvation, and people’s relationship with spiritual forces, be they good (the Holy Spirit) or bad (evil spirits). Moreover, CCC members see the risk of losing salvation coinciding with the risk of *potea maisha*, of losing the good and prosperous life that encompasses good health and good relationships as well as material gains. This indicates that prosperity is holistically conceptualized<sup>44</sup> in terms of a continual victory over evil, first and foremost by means of self-control (and abstinence from the world).

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Robert 2012-11-08.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>41</sup> Marshall, *Political Spiritualities : The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*, chap. 4.

<sup>42</sup> I.e. characteristics emerging from experiencing the Holy Spirit such as love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, and self-control, see Gal. 5:22-23.

<sup>43</sup> Marshall, *Political Spiritualities : The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*, p. 13.

<sup>44</sup> Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism : An Introduction* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 260-63.

Daudi, a senior member of the church, stresses the need to take control of whatever society tries to impose on you. “One thing, you need to be careful with what goes into your ears. That is the major thing. You should not allow anything to penetrate through your ears.”<sup>45</sup> As another member of CCC explained, answering a telephone call from an unknown number could be enough to let an evil spirit in.<sup>46</sup> Taking control over one’s exposure to the world thus safeguards a prosperous life ahead, thereby once again demonstrating the suspicion which is held of the easily corrupted human condition and the centrality of adherence to, and guidance from, a community of fellow saved. Methods of self-control are not, however, univocal but rather the products of a number of individual solutions in relation to the above mentioned method of *kujitambua*, or self-awareness. With proper self-knowledge, CCC members are able to locate different aspects of their lives where they need to be particularly careful in order to keep moving forward. Daniel, a Zanzibar-born police officer in his early 30s and, like Raheli, a child of mainland Christian migrants, elaborates on how he deals with free time with its potential pitfalls. Like Daudi, he stresses the danger of allowing external influences to take control in his life. Daniel’s method of preventing this from happening is to delimit his access to free time. He therefore plans his life meticulously in order to keep himself constantly busy.

If you don’t have a thing to do, well then, there is something that comes, there are ideas that surface. Therefore, if I stay home without anything to do the feelings will come right away.... Of course I am a human being, I eat, I sleep, so [these] temptations must come... if I grant myself free time, I would get time to relax and [these] feelings will come and send me somewhere, feelings that would say, let me go somewhere to find a girl you see... I keep my days busy so I don’t give myself any free time. Temptations still come, but they come during times when I am completely busy with other things. Due to this, I am not able to cut my program and follow the temptations.<sup>47</sup>

Daniel stresses the aspect of keeping busy, perceiving persons as vessels, filled and shaped by the content they allow room. To maintain a life occupied with work and activities enables Daniel to prevent ‘feelings’ emerging, feelings that exist almost as entities. The quest by CCC members to maintain their hold on salvation thus varies from abstinence practices to communal activities and individual prayers in order to provide security. However, none of these techniques alone, due to the precarious context, seems to be enough because of the ongoing suspicion of the predisposition both of the self and others to attract evil.

The relationship between faith, doubt, and skepticism has been discussed by Michael Taussig in his assessment of magical practice in the anthropological literature on the subject. In his analysis, Taussig observes that the ability to perform magic contains levels of skepticism on the part of the magical practitioners themselves. Elaborating on this, Taussig concludes that faith not only “happily coexist[s] with skepticism” but that the two also demand

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Daudi 2012-10-27 (original in English).

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Yemina 2012-11-05.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Daniel 2012-10-29.

each other.<sup>48</sup> Taking Taussig further, Anthony Shenoda discusses the relationship between skepticism and faith in the context of the Coptic Christian minority in Egypt. In terms of the doubt that is raised with regards miracles within the Coptic church, Shenoda confirms that faith and skepticism exist in a mutual relationship and need each other, though not necessarily within a single faith tradition. Instead Shenoda stressed that skepticism – when directed against something external instead of one’s own faith, which in the Egyptian Copts’ case means against Muslims and the state – can also work to help drive faith and belief forward.<sup>49</sup> If we return to CCC members and their modes of suspicion, this insight provides some material for consideration.

Members of the CCC never question their belief in God and the (supernatural) ability God has to intervene in worldly matters, or doctrines or faith. On the contrary, it is the relationships between humans and evil powers (consciously or unconsciously instigated) that are at the fore, comprising the point of reference for modes of suspicion and skepticism that point towards the issue of trust, whether connected with one’s own or another human’s ability to withstand evil.<sup>50</sup> The issue of trust, and the suspicion and skepticism connected to it, however, lead us back to the question of maintaining faith in the particular context of Zanzibar. With Zanzibar being regarded with suspicion due to the presence of evil constantly lurking to lead the saved Christian astray, the religious other, that is, Muslims, are singled out as objects in which evil spiritual forces dwell and prosper. Suspicion towards the other contributes to keeping to the fore questions such as whom one has engaged with or spoken to, and whether one has thereby opened a portal for evil to enter. Thus, in contrast to the example discussed by Taussig above, modes of doubt, suspicion, and skepticism among CCC members do not concern doctrinal belief or questions of the true faith, per se, but are instead connected to the uncertainties brought about by the presence of the supernatural. Belief in God (and so also the devil), and the powers of the supernatural, is never questioned or even doubted. Rather, skepticism becomes a technique used to scan the body and mind for evil. Therefore, with the enemy possibly lurking inside, the act of becoming saved presumes the ongoing task of identifying the potential demonic within the self but also within the ‘other’ humans in the environment of the self, along with an imperative to govern salvation as much as to convert and change. In other words, being saved implies that evil resides in the ‘other’ as much as the self and therefore needs to be identified and destroyed in order to safeguard salvation.<sup>51</sup>

This helps us understand how it is that modes of holiness teaching and deliverance theology exist complementary in a soteriology that promises victory over evil (and thus health and wealth in a holistic framework of reaching a good life). Total seclusion is not an option in a Muslim-majority context perceived as permeated by evil forces, and thus self-control is not seen to offer individuals sufficient protection from such external influences: deliverance and

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<sup>48</sup> Michael T. Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism : Another Theory of Magic," in *Walter Benjamin's Grave*, ed. Michael T. Taussig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 123.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Shenoda, "The Politics of Faith: On Faith, Skepticism, and Miracles among Coptic Christians in Egypt," *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 77, no. 4 (2012): p. 482.

<sup>50</sup> Harri Englund, "Pentecostalism Beyond Belief: Trust and Democracy in a Malawian Township," *Africa* 77, no. 04 (2007).

<sup>51</sup> Marshall, *Political Spiritualities : The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*, p. 14.

spiritual warfare practices are needed to safeguard ongoing spiritual growth. So, even though difference in emphasis between holiness and deliverance exists among CCC's members, few rule out one strategy in favor of the other but use them as complement in order to safeguard their lives on the archipelago.

#### **PENTECOSTAL MODES OF SUSPICION AND SKEPTICISM IN THE CONTEXT OF ZANZIBAR**

It should be noted that experiencing successful practices of self-awareness tends to shift the focus from the realm of the self to that of the other. The confidence gained via the continuous experience of victory over evil through the power of God strengthens faith in ways that trigger CCC members to reach out into the social sphere.<sup>52</sup> Raheli argues that once filled with the power of God, a person is enabled to stand up for God via personal appearance and moral lifestyle (being healthy and prosperous, maintaining good relationships, loving thy neighbor etc.). But bearing witness to the power of God does not stop at moral behavior; spiritually mature people are able to exercise God's authority through the means of spiritual warfare whereby evil is curbed and sickness healed.

If we worship in a true spirit and put God first, then when the strength of God comes over you and you walk with the power of God [then] it is simple to attract people, because people want to be delivered from their problems. If you tell him/her the word of God, and preach the word, then he/she will receive a miracle.<sup>53</sup>

By engaging in such practices of 'truth-telling' (i.e. spreading the word of God), CCC members call on themselves to become agents for change. Hence, processes of sanctification help bring the power of God into the open, enabling CCC members to reach out to people trapped in what is perceived as darkness, which corresponds to what Amos Yong refers to as a "holiness approach to consecrating the world".<sup>54</sup> The individual and social transformation that ensues from experiencing God thus becomes the basic rationale in CCC members' understanding of the recent waves of violence directed toward Christians in Zanzibar: the violence is interpreted as a consequence of the spiritual war undertaken by Christians through the medium of prayers against the dark forces prevailing in Zanzibar. This view follows a common Pentecostal interpretation that sees the developments taking place in the celestial sphere (spiritual realm) also dictating things to come in the material world.<sup>55</sup> In other words, violence directed against Christians reflects a spiritual victory, a sign of how the powers of darkness are starting to lose their hold over Zanzibar society. The recent outbursts offer proof that the devil is frustrated and has taken the battle to the streets. The presence of saved Christians has therefore had an impact, a sign that a wider Christian growth and concomitant social change is really taking place.

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<sup>52</sup> For a discussion on salvation as deliverance from evil see Yong, *In the Days of Caesar : Pentecostalism and Political Theology*, pp. 126-27.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Raheli 2012-10-30.

<sup>54</sup> Yong, *In the Days of Caesar : Pentecostalism and Political Theology*, p. 172.

<sup>55</sup> Ogbu Uke Kalu, "Preserving a Worldview: Pentecostalism in the African Maps of the Universe," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 24, no. 2 (2002): p. 122.

Thus, despite the initial shock when their church was torched in May 2012, many CCC members retrospectively viewed the event in terms of victory. Moreover, the sense of triumph was materialized in the congregation's quick response to the events, not only in rebuilding the damage to the church premises but also by rapidly embarking on constructing a new, larger church building. When the church escaped attacks during another round of riots in October 2012, the interpretation by CCC members was unequivocal: Christians were growing in strength and their commitment to organized strategic prayers and fasting following the attack in May that year had paid off.<sup>56</sup> The attack seems to have strengthened their commitment to their faith which also increased the overall confidence of the congregation. In some way the Church attack made it clear for everyone to see that Zanzibar, a society permeated by evil, was now starting to crack open. The inherent modes of suspicion accompanying the journey to becoming saved shifted, as a result of the violence, from the self to skepticism against the external sites of evil, embodied in Islam and Zanzibari Muslims, giving rise to a boost of faith.

Displaying their Pentecostal Christian identity in the Zanzibari public sphere, however, has its political implications. With the Pentecostal presence generally linked to processes of change (i.e. evangelization and religious conversion), its place within Zanzibar society has become a weapon in discourses which locate Christian institutions within a mainland colonization of the religious, cultural, and political spheres of Zanzibar.<sup>57</sup> Recent religio-political tensions in Zanzibar have therefore emerged in a context where politics of belonging are fusing the lines between religious identity formations and place of origin (Christian vs. Muslim vis-à-vis 'mainland vs. Zanzibar). Does this mean that Pentecostal practices of growth are contributing to increased socio-political tension on the archipelago? Or could the Pentecostals' focus on spiritual warfare, in contrast to physical violence, be seen as a means towards peace?<sup>58</sup>

Even if the CCC's response to physical violence has been manifested in terms of spiritual warfare, their discourses of evil have also contrasted Zanzibar and Islam with the Union and proper Christian faith. CCC practices of spiritual warfare, in confronting the evil linked to local socio-cultural norms and values in Zanzibar, thus take part as agents in the historical contestations over the Union in Zanzibar. The CCC's struggles to remain Christian cannot be unlinked from present political contestations surrounding emerging politics of belonging but, rather, they should be seen as a response to mainlanders' rationales for labor migration (attaining the good life) and experiences of social alienation (mainland origins and Christian belonging) that increasingly are linked to the political context. The (re)shaping of the self through a set of faith techniques not only becomes a way to navigate the uncertainties of migration but also empowers mainlanders to take control over the social sphere within a Pentecostal meta-narrative into which CCC members integrate their own "memories,

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<sup>56</sup> Interviews with Fiona 2012-10-26; Tim 2012-10-17.

<sup>57</sup> Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones : Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*, p. 295.

<sup>58</sup> For an argument supporting the praxis of spiritual warfare as a means towards peace in settings where religious identities could easily be politically manipulated see Englund, "From Spirual Warfare to Spiritual Kinship: Islamophobia and Evangelical Radio in Malawi," p. 184.

experiences and aspirations in a schema of long-term action.”<sup>59</sup> With the Union and its constitution intact (including the right to freedom of religion), the presence of mainland migrant workers (and so also a strong Christian community) is safeguarded. From this perspective, the commitment by members of the CCC to an ongoing spiritual war relates to dominion over territory and space, a form of control that ensures the future of the church, the continuous presence of God in Zanzibar, and so also the economic opportunities and conditions related to the prospect of a prosperous and abundant life.

Returning to the baptism on one of the beaches in Zanzibar town, the act becomes, through the lens of the members of the CCC, a symbol of triumph over evil, whether of spiritual forces connected to the ocean or the violence directed against Christians and mainlanders on the island. Despite the many pitfalls and hazards piling up, being Pentecostal in Zanzibar is perceived as walking under the protection of Jesus, a means of reaching the white sandy beaches of opportunities for a better life. In this way Pentecostal belonging in Zanzibar offers an alternative home,<sup>60</sup> an imagined community protected by ‘the blood of Jesus’, where spiritual empowerment enables aspirations connected to the prospect of economic prosperity despite local social and political marginalization.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the CCC church has not become an institution through which new migrants are accommodated into Zanzibar society. Rather, it offers an alternative locus of resistance where, despite the many different trajectories of ‘mainland’ origins present in the church, a mainland identity is reinforced through Christian discursive practice. In other words, the CCC offers space for temporarily “deterritorialized migrants, united by their religious identities”,<sup>62</sup> at the fringe of, yet still within their own Tanzanian nation-state. Hence, mainland migrants’ subjectification to a Pentecostal ethos in Zanzibar deals with multiple localities simultaneously: Pentecostals engage with the local context in Zanzibar through a combination of abstinence (holiness living) and engagement (modes of spiritual warfare), which despite spending the greater part of their lives in the archipelago, is carried out with one foot on the mainland.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article has assessed how Pentecostal discourses on growth and transformation intersect with the experiences of living in Zanzibar among migrants from mainland Tanzania. The anxiety associated with fears of losing salvation is negotiated via a range of techniques that locate and confront evil. Inherent in such practices is the question of who may be trusted. In the context of Zanzibar, where trust is largely based on religious and ethno-national belonging, CCC members’ modes of suspicion have evolved into outspoken skepticism wherein the

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<sup>59</sup> J. D. Y. Peel, "For Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things? Missionary Narratives and Historical Anthropology," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 3 (1995): p. 587.

<sup>60</sup> Englund, "Cosmopolitanism and the Devil in Malawi," p. 294.

<sup>61</sup> Harvey Gallagher Cox, *Fire from Heaven : The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*(London: Cassell, 1996), pp. 121-22.

<sup>62</sup> Afe Adogame and James V. Spickard, "Introduction," in *Religion Crossing Boundaries: Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora*, ed. Afe Adogame and James V. Spickard (Leiden: Brill, 2010), p. 17.

objectification of evil within the self has shifted towards the other; in the case of CCC members this has consolidated an understanding of the surrounding setting as permeated by evil.

Considering the overall context facing Christian migrants with origins in mainland Tanzania—social alienation, the pressure to succeed economically, resistance to the Islamic setting, the presence of spiritual beings etc.—engaging in the practice of becoming saved hence seems to provide a path by which all these aspects can be addressed. With the prospect of becoming God’s subjects, Pentecostals turn themselves into agents of change by not conforming to local socio-cultural standards. The contextual reading of Pentecostal migrants in Zanzibar inserts discourses of spiritual maturity into local politics. Anti-union Islamic proponents and Pentecostals alike produce spins on narratives of Christian growth in order to highlight the changes taking place in Zanzibar society. This means that even though Pentecostals constitute a tiny minority in Zanzibar<sup>63</sup> their narratives of growth are gaining symbolic significance and becoming a force in larger socio-political contestations regarding Zanzibar’s political future.

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<sup>63</sup> App. 2500 people of a population of 1.3 million.