Going to War: Spiritual Encounters and Pentecostals' Drive for Exposure in Contemporary Zanzibar

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The humid Friday afternoon is turning to evening and a group of Christian migrant workers gather for their weekly intercession and deliverance (*maombi na maombezi*) service. While the church slowly fills up, one congregant after another starts praying. Taking up the arms of prayer (*silaha za maombi*) in order to fight the evil powers (*nguvu za giza*) seen to be ruling over the Zanzibar archipelago, they are going to war. In the hours that follow, afflicted people are delivered from (evil) spirits and forceful intercession prayers invoke the protective power of Jesus—not only to safeguard the members of the church but also to shield Tanzanian society and the nation. In general terms, the prayer service represents a growing feature of contemporary African Christianity, namely, the commitment to fight evil through modes of spiritual warfare.¹

Christian notions of participation in a spiritual war are usually drawn from the Bible passage Eph. 6:10–12² which has spurred debates about evil throughout the history of Christianity. Today ideas about spiritual warfare have gained prominence in the growing presence of Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity³

- 1 Claudia Währisch-Oblau, "Spiritual Warfare—the Royal Road to Liberation and Development in Africa and Europe," in *Encounter Beyond Routine: Cultural roots, Cultural Transition, Understanding of Faith and Cooperation in Development*, 12–24 (Hamburg: Academy of Mission, 2011); Paul Gifford, "Evil Witchcraft and Deliverance in the African Pentecostal worldview," in *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, ed. Clifton Clarke (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 112–131.
- 2 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (NIV).
- 3 I use the term Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity rather than Pentecostalism to point to the variation and diversity that characterizes the sets of churches which are commonly connected the first, second and third wave of charismatic revival during the 1920s, 1970s and 1980s respectively. These sets of churches include classical Pentecostal churches, charismatic movements within the mainline churches (for instance Catholic charismatics) and the so called neo-Pentecostal churches, all of which emphasize the active role of the Holy Spirit; see discussions in Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies and Definitions," in *Studying Global*

globally⁴ where evil forces/spirits are commonly seen as hampering human progress and prosperity.⁵ In relation to African contexts some scholars have therefore argued that the prominence of spiritual warfare among African Christians should be seen as a means by which people may attain the good life and prosperity.⁶ Yet the resulting propensity to see the world in the dual terms of good and evil has also raised concerns about whether, and how, spiritual warfare contributes to the demonization of other religious traditions, and the social and political ramifications this might generate.⁷

This chapter focuses on the implications of spiritual warfare at the City Christian Centre (CCC), the Tanzania Assemblies of God's (TAG) major

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- Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, eds. Allan Anderson *et al.*, 13–29 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Birgit Meyer, "Christianity in Africa: From African independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 447–474.
- 4 René Holvast, *Spiritual Mapping in the United States and Argentina, 1989–2005: A Geography of Fear* (Leiden ; Brill, 2009); Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010); James K. Beilby, and Paul Rhodes Eddy, "Introduction: Introducing Spiritual Warfare a Survey of Key Issues and Debates," in *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, eds. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012), 1–46.
 - 5 J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Eugene: Regnum, 2013), 47.
 - 6 Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
 - 7 Eg. Harri Englund, "From Spirual 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), 167–188; Gifford, "Evil Witchcraft"; Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015); Rosalind I.J. Hackett, "Discourses of Demonization in Africa and Beyond," *Diogenes* 50, no. 3 (2003): 61–75; Päivi Hasu, "Rescuing Zombies from the Hands of Witches: Pentecostal charismatic Christianity and Spiritual Warfare in the Plural Religious Setting of Coastal Tanzania," *Swedish Misological Themes* 97, no. 3 (2009): 417–440; Päivi Hasu, "The Witch, The Zombie and the Power of Jesus," *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* 34, no. 1 (2009): 70–83; Andreas Heuser, "Encoding Caesar's Realm—Variants of Spiritual Warfare Politics in Africa," in *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*, ed. Martin Lindhardt (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 270–290; Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009); Opoku Onyinah, "Deliverance as a way of confronting witchcraft in modern Africa: Ghana as a Case History," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5, no. 1 (2002): 107–134; Tony Richie, "Demonization, Discernment, and Deliverance in Interreligious Encounters," in *Interdisciplinary and religio-cultural discourses on a spirit-filled world : loosing the spirits*, eds. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Kirsteen Kim and Amos Yong (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 171–184; Amy Stambach, "Spiritual warfare 101: Preparing the student for Christian battle," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39, no. (2009): 137–157; Erwin Van der Meer, "Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare and Mission in Africa," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 34, no. 2 (2010): 155–166; Währisch-Oblau, "Spiritual Warfare."

outreach and the largest Pentecostal congregation on the semi-autonomous Zanzibar archipelago, and the significance such spiritual practices gain in a context religiously defined by the predominance of Islam (97%). While Islam for centuries has shaped the sociocultural setting on the islands,⁸ Zanzibar has, since its incorporation within the United Republic of Tanzania in 1964, been a site of political contestations centered around the identity of the Zanzibar state.⁹ In this contested sociopolitical milieu, Muslim belonging, as a major unifying component, has resurfaced as a marker of authenticity, with Muslim revival groups pushing to restore Zanzibar's past by promoting a break with the Union and political sovereignty;¹⁰ this goal sparked violence against Christian and Tanzanian institutions in 2012.¹¹ The community of migrant Tanzanian mainlanders which has collected around the CCC provides a locus for assessing how spiritual warfare takes place and is interpreted by a Pentecostal minority in a politically tense context.

Based on ethnographic research in Zanzibar,¹² this paper argues for the prominent role of spiritual warfare in the daily practice of Pentecostal Christians in Zanzibar, not only through its providing explanations for sociopolitically violent events, but also by playing its own part in the production of social tensions. My approach is to fuse the CCC's theological understanding of spiritual warfare with church members' interpretations of social conflict. Firstly, a theology of spiritual warfare is used as a means for understanding how a Pentecostal minority interprets its position in a conflict situation; and, secondly, the chapter discusses how the practices evolving from such theological

8 John Middleton, *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Randall L. Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African coast, 800–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

9 Eg. M.A. Bakari, *The Democratisation Process in Zanzibar: A Retarded Transition*, *Hamburg African studies*, 0947 4900 11 (Hamburg: Inst. für Afrika-Kunde, 2001); Bernadeta Killian, "The State and Identity Politics in Zanzibar: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation in Tanzania," *African Identities* 6, no. 2 (2008): 99–125.

10 Marie-Aude Fouéré, "Recasting Julius Nyerere in Zanzibar: the Revolution, the Union and the Enemy of the Nation," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 3 (2014): 478–496; Roman Loimeier, "Zanzibar's Geography of Evil: The Moral Discourse of the Anṣār al-sunna in Contemporary Zanzibar," *Journal for Islamic Studies* 31 (2011): 4–28.

11 Hans Olsson, *Jesus for Zanzibar: Narratives of Pentecostal (Non-)Belonging, Islam, and Nation* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

12 The analysis builds on ethnographic research carried out in Zanzibar in 2012 at the CCC. During the four months of field research in total (divided into two periods) I conducted 25 qualitative (recorded) interviews, two focus-group interviews, and engaged in numerous periods of participant observation, in addition to many informal conversations and personal communications with members of the CCC.

readings of the world gain wider social significance. In order to do this I lean on Harri Englund's¹³ suggestion that the politics of Christian practices in Africa today should be examined through the lens of public engagements rather than through institutionalized politics. Situating the CCC's public significance in the powerful narrative of Christian growth (including social transformation) produced by the church's engagements in spiritual warfare, I argue that the practices which result provide the basis for producing a Pentecostal counter-public¹⁴ in direct conflict with the wider sociocultural norms and customs of Zanzibar society. Thus, based on their aim to expose what they regard as the real problem of society (i.e., the presence of evil), Pentecostal Christians should be seen as significant socio-political agents because their spiritual practices have the goal not only of social change but also of a new civil order.¹⁵ Furthermore, these counter cultural manifestations of Pentecostal Christianity in Zanzibar intersect with the hegemonic status of Tanzania Mainland (the Union), so making spiritual warfare practices public arguably adds to the prevailing tensions between Zanzibar and its mainland partner within the United Republic of Tanzania.

The chapter begins by discussing Christian churches in Zanzibar in general before addressing, from the perspective of the CCC, the practice of spiritual warfare. I then turn to its role in relation to violent events taking place in 2012, when the CCC was torched alongside other churches and political institutions in protests over Zanzibar's role and future place within the Union. Finally, the public significance that the practice of spiritual warfare gains in the context of Zanzibar will be addressed.

1 Christianity in Zanzibar

Zanzibar, located some 25 km off the Tanzanian coast and comprising the two major islands of Unguja and Pemba, is dominated by people adhering to the Muslim faith (primarily Sunni but also Shî'a and Ibadî).¹⁶ Of the islands'

13 Harri Englund, "Introduction: Rethinking African Christianities, Beyond the Religion-Politics Conundrum," in *Christianity and Public culture in Africa*, ed. Harri Englund (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), 1–26.

14 Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002).

15 Birgit Meyer, "Going and Making Public: Pentecostalism as Public Religion in Ghana" In *Christianity and Public Culture in Africa*, ed. Harri Englund (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), 149–166; see also Yong, *In the Days*; Heuser, "Encoding Caesar's Realm."

16 M.A. Bakari, "Religion, Secularism, and Political Discourse in Tanzania: Competing Perspectives by Religious Organizations," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 8, no. 1 (2012): 1–34.

1.3 million inhabitants, around 25,000 are Christians. In contrast to the longer established Roman Catholic and Anglican churches (and to some extent also the Lutheran church), the increase and expansion of Pentecostal Charismatic churches on the islands is something novel that has coincided with the growing flows of labor from Tanzania Mainland to Zanzibar that have followed economic liberalization and polity reform in the mid-1980s. Pentecostal congregations are therefore primarily attended by mainland migrants who come to the islands in search of economic opportunities—especially in the booming tourist industry that has developed since the 1990s.¹⁷ The CCC is no exception to this trend, as most of its members are migrants with origins outside the archipelago.

The CCC originated with a group of deployed mainland Tanzanian army officers who gathered for prayer and worship in the early 1990s, led by a Muslim-born TAG missionary. The CCC's founder and spiritual leader, Pastor Dixon Kaganga, was one of those soldiers. Under Kaganga's leadership the CCC has grown from small group of 35 Christians to a ministry that in 2012 hosted over 900 Sunday visitors. It is currently the largest Pentecostal congregation in the archipelago, equal in size to the largest Roman Catholic and Lutheran congregations. Around 70 other further Pentecostal Charismatic churches and smaller congregations also exist around the islands, together bringing the total to 4,500 Pentecostal Charismatic Christians in Zanzibar. As already indicated, the limited, yet growing role of new Christian churches has not passed unnoticed. Pentecostals' use of music and loudspeakers is one controversial issue; evangelization through the means of public preaching another. Partly as a reaction to these growing Pentecostal and Christian activities in Zanzibar, various Muslim revival groups critical of Zanzibar's political status within the Union have also been formed and launched since the late 1990s.¹⁸

One such group, called Uamsho (Awakening),¹⁹ surfaced in 2012 as "the Zanzibari voice" promoting increased political autonomy in relation to the Union structure.²⁰ It claimed that the impact of external influences, whether

17 Stefan Gössling and Ute Schulz, "Tourism-Related Migration in Zanzibar, Tanzania," *Tourism Geographies* 7, no. 1 (2005): 43–62; Akbar A. Keshodkar, *Tourism and Social Change in Post Socialist Zanzibar: Struggles for Identity, Movement, and Civilization* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013).

18 Roman Loimeier, *Between Social Skills and Marketable Skills: The Politics of Islamic Education in 20th Century Zanzibar* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 116.

19 Jumuyia ya Uamsho na Mihadhara ya Kiislamu Zanzibar (the Association of Islamic Awareness and Public Preaching,) was at that time a popular Islamic NGO promoting Zanzibar sovereignty in relation to Tanzania Mainland and the Union structure.

20 Marie-Aude Fouéré, "Zanzibar independent in 2015? Constitutional Reform, Politicized Islam and Separatist Claims," *Mambo! Recent research findings in Eastern Africa-French*

Western tourism, mainland immigration, or growing Christian churches, was causing the moral degeneration of the Zanzibar public sphere.²¹ Throughout 2012, Uamsho used public rallies to voice the critique, which resulted in the Zanzibar government imposing a ban on public gatherings organized by religious organizations. Despite the ban, on May 25th 2012, Uamsho arranged a public rally to discuss the Union that was later followed by large anti-Union demonstrations in Zanzibar Town; in response, the prominent Uamsho leader, Sheikh Musa, was arrested. With discontent growing among Uamsho supporters, people gathered outside the Madema police station demanding the release of their leader and, when their pleas were denied, their grievance spilled onto the streets. The central areas of Zanzibar Town were soon in open riot. A wide range of political institutions and premises associated with the Union, the ruling party of Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), and Tanzania Mainland were raided and attacked during the following days and the animosities did not stop until armed forces from the mainland arrived on the islands. One of the first institutions to be attacked during the riots was the CCC, where an allegedly armed gang of Uamsho supporters set the pastor's car and the interior of the church on fire on May 26th 2012.²²

The attack highlighted a link between the presence of Pentecostal Christians and the Union, which by union critical Zanzibari voices are seen as signifiers of a mainland (Christian) domination of the Muslim majority of

Institute for Research in Africa x, no. 2 (2012):1–4; Fouéré, "Recasting Julius Nyerere." Constitutionally, the semi-autonomous Zanzibar archipelago elects its own government and president, and votes for a Union president and government. The Union government, however, is also the government of Tanzania Mainland (which is the official name of the area previously known as Tanganyika) which makes the United Republic a two-tier government Union of which Tanzania Mainland's government also is responsible for issues related to the Union. The Union is thus not actually a Union between two nations but a structure of which Zanzibar is part, with a degree of self determination in terms of internal affairs such as Islamic family law while questions of foreign affairs and national security are the province of the Union structure. A person with Zanzibari citizenship is hence both a Zanzibari and a Tanzanian voting both for a Zanzibari president and the Union president, while a citizen in Tanzania Mainland votes for a president who is both the Union president and the president of "Tanzania Mainland."

21 Loimeier, "Zanzibar's Geography."

22 On the riots in May 2012 see "Rioters torch churches in Z'bar," *The Daily News* May 28, 2012, accessed June 11, 2012, <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* May 28, 2012, accessed May 30, 2012, <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/news/4-national-news/22687-destruction-as-rioters-run-amok-in-zanzibar.html>. For more on the riots in 2012, see also Olsson *Jesus for Zanzibar*, Chapter 2.

Zanzibar.²³ It is in this contested public sphere that the CCC's practice of spiritual warfare takes place. But how should spiritual warfare be understood and what does the practice actually imply? How are engagements in a spiritual war materialized in the everyday practice of Christian faith?

2 The CCC and Spiritual Warfare

In a sermon discussing the role of spiritual warfare, Pastor Dixon Kaganga stated that "salvation is a declaration of war." The church was seen as equal to God's army and every Christian was one of its soldiers.²⁴ To be "born again" as a "saved" Christian (*aliyeokoka*)²⁵ implied active and vigorous commitment to God through warfare. Based on the Bible passages 2 Cor 10:3–5²⁶ and

23 Ahmed, Mohammed Saleh, "The Impact of Religious Knowledge and the Concept of Dini Wal Duniya in Urban Zanzibari Life-Style," in *Knowledge, Renewal and Religion : Repositioning and Changing Ideological and Material Circumstances among the Swahili on the East African coast*, ed. Kjersti Larsen (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2009), 199; Jonathan Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones : Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011). Religious demographics have been a politically tense and highly debated field as religious belonging has not been included in an official census since the 1960s. Officially the ratio between Christians and Muslims in Tanzania as a whole is considered to be of equal and stable proportions. However, recent external surveys, such as the Pew Forum's survey (Pew, "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, www.pewforum.org, 23) point to a rise in Christianity and indicate that around 30 million (60%) of the Tanzanian population today consider themselves Christians. For the numbers of the last official census see Athumani Liviga and Zubeda Tumbo-Masabo, "Muslims in Tanzania: Quest for Equal Footing," in *Justice Rights and Worship: Religion and Politics in Tanzania*, ed. Rwekaza S. Mukandala et al. (Dar es Salaam: E & D Limited, 2006), 149–150.

24 Kaganga, English sermon February 2, 2012.

25 In many Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches being born again refers to the second birth in the spirit found in the Bible passage John 3:3ff. In Swahili, born again literally translates as *kuzaliwa ya pili*. This concept is, however, rarely used in Swahili. Among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Tanzania (termed *makanisa ya kiroho*, spiritual churches, or *makanisa ya wokovu*, salvation churches) being born again is discussed in terms of *kuokoka*, to be saved. To be saved could be translated to both *kuokolewa* and *kuokoka* with *kuokolewa* connoting passiveness while *kuokoka* refers to a process of activity in order to remain saved, i.e., something one must continuously work at, highlighting the on-going work of sanctification. In the English-speaking part of the CCC's congregation, however, members used the concept born again to imply *kuokoka*. I therefore use the terms to be saved and born again interchangeably when referring to CCC members.

26 "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to

Eph. 5:13–17²⁷ Kaganga systematically delineated three aspects involved in this war, namely: (i) two opposing sides fighting (good and evil); (ii) the presence of weapons; and (iii) a battlefield where the fight takes place. After determining these basic features, Kaganga stressed that the battlefield is not located in the material world but is part of a spiritual war between the forces of light (*nguvu za nuru*) and the forces of darkness (*nguvu za giza*) which is fought with weapons of prayer that can be launched both individually and communally. While observing that the world should not be seen as evil as such, Kaganga highlighted that the presence of evil in the world is determined by the existence of evil spirits. For Kaganga, “hardships confronting humankind” are thus “ultimately spiritual in nature”²⁸ and can, therefore, only be overcome through spiritual engagements. By committing to spiritual warfare, the presence of evil in the world—sickness or lack of health or, as in Zanzibar, being targeted, discriminated against, and hated due to professing Christian belonging in public—can be reduced and championed. Kaganga stressed that it is through prayer Christians can tap into, and utilize, God’s power, thereby situating prayer as the most powerful act in which a human can engage.²⁹ While this locates prayer as human empowerment and agency in this-worldly life, prayer and warfare practices also pose questions about their effect on social relations. Could prayers influence society to move in a better direction and so also influence social well-being more generally?

Among CCC members, social encounters outside of the congregation in many ways represented occasions where the Christian could lose her spiritual focus and potentially also her salvation. The world contains the risk of losing and drifting away from stern spiritual attachment. A possible negative outcome of such loss of attention could, for instance, be fighting back physically when faced by physical threats, or doubting in the efficacy of prayer itself. Strict adherence to the spiritual war, and the change and progress this activity promises, thus becomes a prerequisite for the individual’s coping with the social reality of a world which, in the CCC’s view of the social setting, is seen to be

demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (NIV).

27 “But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” (NIV).

28 Yong, *In the Days*, 126.

29 Kaganga, English sermon, February 2, 2012.

ruled by malevolent spirits (in Swahili referred to as *mapepo*, *majini* and *mashetani*). From the CCC's perspective, this means that all actions that enable the individual to remain saved are, in certain ways, related to the spiritual war. Let me give an example of how this manifested in the lives of CCC members.

Raheli, a self-employed shopkeeper in her forties, stressed that every evening she engaged herself in strategic prayers in order to fight and confront peculiar habits (*tabia za ajabu ajabu*)³⁰ connected to her past life before becoming a "saved" Christian—habits which, if left unattended, could lead her astray. In order to address this danger she made use of the weapon of prayer (*silaha ya maombi*), which placed her in communication with God. Raheli thus routinely engaged in spiritual war as a means to deal with dangerous emotions, something which also provided confidence and guidance in her relationship vis-à-vis the social world of Zanzibar.³¹

In his sermon on the subject Kaganga emphasized the difference this outcome implies in both method and action. A "saved" Christian needs to understand that it is the mind of the believer that is the battlefield, the place where the devil needs to be fought in order to utilize God's power. Prayer activates God's knowledge (here implying God's plan for humans). Through the use of prayer CCC members are able to demolish the forces of evil by making them obedient to Christ.³² Kaganga's elaboration corresponds to what Beilby and Eddy³³ have referred to as a "classical view" of spiritual warfare, in which a strong focus is placed on the spiritual development of the saved Christian. It is through evolving spiritual maturity that CCC Christians are able to move from a position of isolation towards social engagements. In terms of social relations this implies an internalization of the spiritual war in all areas of life, thus building resistance as well as the ability to fend off pressure to convert to Islam or adapt to the local norms and customs shaped by a Muslim society. Hence, while evil is constantly convicted through violent confrontation in the spiritual world, material confrontations need to manifest this victory through the expression of love, which turns love into both outcome and proof of successful spiritual practice. In this way spiritual warfare does not only serve to protect members of the CCC from evil, but also attempts to unveil evil through social engagements and outreach. Spiritual warfare could therefore be seen to drive Christians into the social sphere and, with growing numbers of mature and

30 *Tabia za ajabu ajabu* generally implies actions of immoral character in Swahili (*ajabu* lit. miracle, wonder, surprise). Raheli mentioned the examples of thief or adulterer while explaining the concept.

31 Raheli, interview with author, October 30, 2012.

32 Kaganga, English Sermon February 2, 2012.

33 Beilby and Eddy, "Introduction."

skillful prayer warriors able to fend off evil, the impact of such spiritual activities was regarded as increasingly influencing developments in the social world. Growing Christian engagements in the spiritual world thus determined the progress made in the material world.³⁴ This was something which surfaced when members of the CCC discussed and interpreted the attack on their premises in 2012.

3 Making Sense of Violence

While the initial response of CCC members to the burning of their church was one of despair, the congregation quickly moved from seeing the event as something entirely negative to seeing it as an incident leading to progress and growth. Alongside rebuilding it and strengthening the outer walls of the compound, the congregation devoted a full month to intense prayers and fasting.³⁵ The increased commitment to prayer was not only seen as contributing to the rapid reconstruction of the building; it came to represent an actual renewal of the church. Dreams of expanding the current infrastructure by constructing a “more modern” church building at twice the size were put into action. Moreover, funds were raised within the congregation as well as through international connections.

It was in this context of reconstruction and expansion that interpretations started to emerge that saw the attack as a consequence of the church's long-standing commitment to spiritual warfare. The growing community of committed prayer warriors (*waombaji*) was seen to have stirred up the spiritual realm, that is, the spirits that were seen by the CCC to be empowered by Arab colonial rule in the past and the ongoing presence of Islam in Zanzibar's present. Arab colonialism and Islam were hence both viewed as the reason for Zanzibar's being the “storage house” for evil spirits in Tanzania: a place “controlled by demons.”³⁶ The presence of a community of morally committed Christians invoking the transformative and liberating power of the Holy Spirit had, in other words, started to change the spiritual balance of the islands. The hegemony of evil had been challenged by a group of “saved” Christians entering the

34 Ogbu 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): 122.

35 This was nothing unique to the CCC; fasting and different types of prayer actions are common Pentecostal approaches to dealing with unwanted events and a way of dealing with the dark forces that were seen to be behind the animosities. See Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 218.

36 Daudi, interview with author, October 28, 2012.

spiritual war, thereby contributing to a discourse that the devil's dominion over the islands was fading.

In this light, violence directed towards Christians was interpreted as a consequence, and so also proof, of their successful spiritual work. Christians' spiritual practices had exposed the strong presence of evil and made what had been hidden visible to the public. As with the deliverance of a spiritually afflicted individual, this initiative of delivering Zanzibar from the presence of evil could not be conducted without a battle. By framing the CCC's spiritual warfare in terms of a territorial deliverance of great scale, eruptions of social violence were therefore not seen as a surprise. The violence and attack on the church in May was interpreted as the materialization of a spiritual victory in the making, implying that the full deliverance of society had not yet been attained; the evil spirits in control of it would not leave without a fight. This highlights the propensity, mentioned above, to perceive what happens in the material world as a manifestation of developments in the spiritual realm.³⁷

The narrative of spiritual victory in the making was consolidated when a new round of Uamsho-led anti-Union riots commenced in October 2012 but left the CCC premises untouched. From the viewpoint of CCC members this was a further confirmation that their ongoing commitment to spiritual warfare had improved the general situation. Even though the dark forces of the society had again resorted to violence, they had become weaker. Within this interpretative framework, attacks on Union-supportive political institutions in October 2012 were seen by CCC members as a pretext for forcing Christians to leave the islands.³⁸ The only way for the evil powers to win this battle was to force Christians to leave, and for CCC members, the only way this could happen was if the Union failed. Consequently, in desperation, the evil powers attacked political institutions that supported the Union. As I have argued elsewhere, prayers backing the Union therefore became part of CCC members' daily religious praxis, investing the Union with a sacred status as the political structure facilitating the spiritual battle of Christians.³⁹ The CCC's affirmation of the Union thus strengthened already existing discourses in Zanzibar that linked Christian growth to the presence of the Union. From the perspective of the CCC, the Union provided a venue for the spiritual war, while the spiritual war was also needed to ensure the longevity of the Union. As one CCC member put it while reflecting on the tense setting: "It is not a usual war ... it is a spiritual

37 Kalu, "Preserving a worldview."

38 Mama John October 1, 2012, Rose October 27, 2012, Neema November 11, 2012, Focus group interview, CCC youth group November 15, 2012, all with author.

39 Olsson, *Jesus for Zanzibar*, Chapter 6.

war ... But it is due to the Union that we Christians are here with them ... We know it is because of the Union that *wazanzibari* receive the grace to know Jesus. It [the Union] is also a way.”⁴⁰

Interpretations by members of the CCC not only connected their growing church with the spiritual war but also placed Christian expansion in continuity with the establishment of the Union. Consequently, Pentecostals' commitment to prayer became part of a moral responsibility to keep the Tanzanian nation (the Union) intact. In this context, a number of public acts signified success in the spiritual war: Christian aesthetics; men tucking in their shirts; women wearing trousers; loud worship services; moral discourses concerning the display of love and prayer for those not saved; adhering to monogamous marriage; and being a successful (Christian) businessman, especially in light of being discriminated against, subjected to violence, or called *kafir* (infidel). For its part, the Union was partly emblematic of the materialization of successful spiritual warfare but was also the structure through which change and salvation could be brought to Zanzibar.

4 The Political Ramifications of Pentecostal Public Engagements

The narrative of Christian growth was, however, not solely a perception present within the CCC; it also circulated among Union-critical Muslims in Zanzibar when assessing the contemporary status of the archipelago.⁴¹ Rather than being a positive feature in the latter case, however, Christian growth was perceived as part of a degeneration of Zanzibar's socio-cultural milieu, linked to

40 *Siyo vita ya kawaida ... ni vita ya kiroho ... Lakini kwa sababu tuu ya muungano na wakristo tukawemo ... tunajua kwa sababu ya muungano ilikuwa ni neema ya wazanzibari kumjua Yesu. Ni njia pia.* Rose, interview with author, October 29, 2012.

41 The role of Christianity presented here draws from a focus group interview I conducted with eight young Muslim men and women (November 17, 2012), most of them either enrolled at a university or with a degree in higher education. Several of the interviewees occasionally engaged in interreligious peace work undertaken by representatives of the Muslim community and the mainline (not Pentecostal) churches in Zanzibar facilitated by Zanzibar Interfaith Centre (ZANZIC). From different parts of Zanzibar, all supported a sovereign Zanzibar—an agenda eagerly promoted by Uamsho in 2011–2012. The interview took place some weeks after the Uamsho leaders were jailed, when support for the organization was politically suppressed due to the October riots. While none of the interviewees claimed to be part of Uamsho they all voiced their support for what it had tried to accomplish. None believed that Uamsho had anything to do with the attacks on Christians, seeing the accusation as a government scheme to quell an increasingly popular public voice favoring Zanzibari independence.

exploitative, capitalist-driven and politically colored flows of migration from Tanzania Mainland to Zanzibar. However, it was primarily the newly arriving mainland Christians (*wakristo wameokuja*) who were targeted. Contrasted to local (Anglican and Roman Catholic) Christians (*wakristo wa asili*) who were regarded as assimilated into Zanzibar culture (*utamaduni*), mainland Christians were viewed as political agents arriving to change Zanzibar. Therefore, critique against Christianity did to a certain degree differentiate between various Christian denominations in Zanzibar—though even those lines have a tendency to shift and Roman Catholics have been attacked⁴²—primarily targeting Christian newcomers. Communities such as the CCC were treated with skepticism, seen to come with the objective to destroy (*lengo la kuiharibu*) Zanzibar.⁴³ As one Muslim Zanzibari expressed it, “they are coming to wage war (*wanakuja kupiga vita*)” against local “Zanzibari culture (*utamaduni ya wazanzibari*).”⁴⁴

Christian public practices that ran counter to local norms and customs had, according to these Muslims, been generating a fear (*imejenga hofu*) of new Christian arrivals. “Why are they [Christians] coming in big numbers? What do they really want?”⁴⁵ For one of the interviewees the Christian agenda was clear.

Invasion, this is an invasion of land (*ardhi*). Christians are to be blamed for this; they invaded these lands and built churches ... It seems that one day they just appeared [at the churches]; they play drums that the whole town can hear, drums, drums, and disturbance. These are practices which are performed intentionally; they are repulsive in a way that makes people hate them.⁴⁶

The statements do not say anything about Christians’ spiritual significance. Yet the discourse reveals discontent with how Christians acted and behaved in the public sphere. The relatively small numbers of Christians did not, in other

42 “RC priest shot on x-mas in Zanzibar,” *The Guardian* December 27, 2012; “Catch the killers, JK orders police,” February 18, 2013 *The Citizen*, accessed February 19, 2013. <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/component/content/article/37-tanzania-top-news-story/28921-catch-the-killers-jk-orders-police.html>.

43 Male interviewee, focus group interview November 17, 2012.

44 Male interviewees, focus group interview November 17, 2012.

45 Male interviewee, focus group interview November 17, 2012, English in original.

46 *Uvamizi, huu uvamizi wa ardhi. Wakristo wamekuwa wakashutumiwa sana kufanya hichi kitu, wakavamia ardhi hizi na kujenga makanisa ... Inatokea siku wanakuja pale wanapiga ngoma tu mji mzima, ngoma ngoma vurugu. Hii ni vitendo ambavyo vinafanywa makusudi wachukize yaani wanafanya watu wachukie.* Male interviewee, focus group interview, Zanzibar town, November 17, 2012.

words, go invisible and unnoticed by the Muslim public. On the contrary, they were used by local Muslim agents to represent what for many were seen as unwanted social developments in Zanzibar. For these Muslims Christians might comprise a whipping boy in a political agenda, yet the narrative of Christian impact on social change in Zanzibar also circulates among Pentecostal Christians and the public significance of spiritual practices is what draws Pentecostal Christians to display God's victory in the open. Spiritual warfare, therefore, not only provides internal strength and endurance for the CCC but also publicly reveals the CCC as a counter-cultural force⁴⁷ driven to unveil the "real world" as it actually is.⁴⁸

Birgit Meyer⁴⁹ has argued that contemporary Pentecostal discursive practices of exposure, and the work towards social transformation they embody, should be situated in the historical context of Christian practice more generally. Referring to the (evangelical/charismatic Christian) Ghanaian context, Meyer argues that the introduction of Christianity to Africa was linked to a civilizing praxis of relocating the local cultural other—which included the "occult," Islam, and African traditional religion(s)—in a framework of backwardness and secrecy. The hierarchical relations produced by such relocations were shaped within a larger project driven by the will to expose the true nature of reality (most often for the sake of demonstrating the supremacy of Christianity). While ensuing interpretations differed in how the "hidden" was understood and valued across the various African Christian traditions, Meyer argues that the drive for exposure reinforces Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity as a public culture. By unmasking the cause of deprivation and affliction, contemporary Pentecostal Charismatic practices can therefore be placed in a long Christian tradition of revealing what "lies hidden behind the surface of appearance."⁵⁰ The normative practice of revealing what is hidden is, in other words, inherent to what it means to be a Christian. In the case of the CCC, this involves a process of identifying Zanzibar as a backward society in which the archipelago's current state of affairs is caused by the historical dominion of Islam and the evil spirits connected to it.

While the practice and knowledge connected to uncovering reality is not exclusive to Christianity—it has also been prominent in African traditional

47 Joel Robbins, "Anthropology of Religion," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, eds. Allan Anderson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 156–178; Kirk Dombrowski, *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

48 Meyer, "Christianity," 152.

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*, 154.

settings⁵¹— I argue that the CCC's understandings of the violence directed towards Christians in Zanzibar should be read in the context of revealing the world through spiritual engagements. It is part of a praxis which, in Meyer's⁵² terms, serves to make the hidden public. In the eyes of CCC members, the events in 2012 publicly uncovered what they already knew was the main problem with Zanzibar, namely, the strong influence of evil running through its society.

Moreover, by not retaliating violently to violent provocation, but, rather, increasing their commitment to spiritual warfare, CCC members not only argued for their impact on society but also stressed their agency in terms of spiritual maturity and civility vis-à-vis Zanzibar. As Christians they were different and also acted differently, thereby defining Christian belonging in sharp contrast to traditional Zanzibari ways. Such distinctions were emphasized through the elaboration of value-charged dichotomies involving Christian mainlanders and Zanzibari Muslims, the latter seen to promote hate over love, religious education over secular education, ethnocentrism over national unity, and *sharia* law over the secular constitution of Tanzania.⁵³ Combined, this constituted Zanzibar as a religiously biased society (*udini*)⁵⁴ where Muslim norms and values were seen as the reason why Zanzibari were against all kinds of (modern) innovations including the capacity to cultivate their own food (agriculture), educate their children, or embrace tourism.⁵⁵ As a CCC member addressing the situation expressed it: "A lot of people desire to be saved (*kuokoka*) but religiocentrism (*udini*) keeps them trapped. Their belief traps them."⁵⁶

51 Harry G. West, *Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

52 Meyer, "Christianity," 154.

53 See Olsson, *Jesus for Zanzibar*.

54 *Udini*, translated as devoutness, religiousness, or religiocentrism, is often referred to as an unwanted development in Tanzanian society following the end of the *ujamaa* regime: the rise of religious belonging and religious alliances have created intra and interreligious tensions and turmoil which threaten the narrative of a nation built on peace and unity despite its multireligious demography. On the more general discursive use of *udini* in relation to perceptions of national identity and the religious other among Christians and Muslims in Tanzania see, for instance, Thomas, J. Ndaluka, *Religious Discourse, Social Cohesion and Conflict: Muslim Christian Relations in Tanzania* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012); Frans Jozef Servaas Wijzen, "Religionism in Tanzania," in *Identity and Religion. A Multidisciplinary Approach*, eds. A. Borsboom and F. Jaspers (Saarbrücken: Verlag für Entwicklungspolitik, 2003), 121–137.

55 Neema, interview with author, November 11, 2012.

56 *Watu wengi wanatamani kuokoka, lakini udini umeufunga. Imani zao zimewafunga*. Haruni, interview with author, September 28, 2012.

The cultural critique, which is rather explicit in terms of such views, goes back to notions of Zanzibar being a place “controlled by demons.” While Zanzibari were seen as backward and restricted due to the influence of Islam, Christianity and Christians were seen to be open to development and progress and thus vital as the means to promote the change that was needed. CCC Christians’ were committed to love as social praxis, hard work, and secular education, elements that were seen as superior characteristics of a Christian life. The CCC counter-cultural position not only places Islam (and Zanzibar) as the locus of difference but also stresses the need to liberate the Zanzibar populace from spiritual bondage. Just as the spiritual war was an ongoing venture in the minds of CCC members, the evil dwelling in the other has to be addressed in order to produce a peaceful society.

In the interpretation of CCC members, a Christian individual cannot remain idle but has the responsibility to expand God’s peace. Converting the enemy to a friend hence serves as *the* way of creating social cohesion and peaceful co-existence. A comparison could here be made with Harri Englund’s study of urban Pentecostals in Chinsapo township, Lilongwe, Malawi, where Englund⁵⁷ assesses the social effects of spiritual warfare practices in the context of Christian-Muslim relationships. By situating spiritual warfare between the individual’s salvation and the salvation of others, Englund argues that it serves as an important framework for understanding Pentecostals’ social engagements. Like the CCC in Zanzibar, Englund stresses that Pentecostals in Malawi see the conversion of the other to a fellow follower of Jesus as the means for establishing peaceful coexistence in the social sphere. Spiritual warfare, therefore, informs discourses of engagement that contains the potential for Christian expansion and growth.⁵⁸ Englund takes Pentecostal radio testimonies of spiritual battles with evil as examples to illustrate how public witness not only strengthens Pentecostals’ own faith through narrative praxis but also stresses salvation as a life-saving event.

In a similar way, the presence of evil in Zanzibar thus directs the CCC towards the other, the non-saved Christian, and situates spiritual warfare as an essential medium for expanding the community of saved Christians, a goal that is demanded by Christian individuals’ experiences of Zanzibar as a site of evil (violence, discrimination). The ongoing production of an imagined community of spiritual kin, persisting via prayer and healing, becomes a practice

57 Englund, “From Spiritual Warfare.”

58 *Ibid.*, 176.

which will turn strangers, even the Muslim other, into a potential fellow. Rather than increasing social tensions, therefore, Englund concludes that the constant will for expansion in spiritual warfare encourages modes of civility and human relationships.⁵⁹ Contrary to scholars who have asserted that Pentecostals' commitment to fight evil constitutes a potential site for sociopolitical conflicts and violence,⁶⁰ Englund's assessment claims that spiritual warfare redirects Christians from physical violence.

Yet, in the case of praxis at the CCC, perceptions of Zanzibaris' lack of civility are connected with outright rejection of both their culture and religion and, furthermore, Zanzibari are discursively stripped of human agency. Thus, while in certain ways the spiritual war promoted by the CCC produces the modes of non-violence presented by Englund, I would argue that the transformation envisaged by such practices needs to be situated in how it is received as a public culture. As already touched upon, for some Zanzibari Muslims the CCC's public engagements not only signify disrespect of local norms and customs but also constitute an attack on Zanzibar's political sovereignty. Thus, placed in the tense socio-political context of Zanzibar-Tanzania Mainland relations, spiritual warfare, publicly voiced in forceful prayers, becomes not only activities through which CCC members intend to make "the effects of God's victory over all evil powers"⁶¹ known in Zanzibar, but also turns Pentecostal practice into a significant marker of both social resistance and political dominion. In recognizing that the narrative of Christians on the rise circulates among CCC Christians and Zanzibari Muslims alike, the public significance of such spiritual practices not only becomes apparent, but also possibly influenced the escalation of the violence in 2012.

59 *Ibid.*, 181–184.

60 Gifford, "Evil Witchcraft"; Hackett, "Discourses"; Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*; Richie, "Demonization"; Beilby and Eddy, "Introduction." There are some cases where this has led Pentecostals to support military activity against the other. Amos Yong gives an example from Guatemala where a number of Pentecostal pastors defended the government against accusations of atrocities directed towards the country's indigenous people. By depicting indigenous Indians as communist demons the Pentecostal pastors placed the indigenous people on the dark side of good and evil (Yong, *In the Days*, 134). For another example of the dubious moral outcome of spiritual warfare practices see Wink and Hardin's response to Emma Greenwood's presentation of strategic spiritual warfare against an abortion clinic in Texas which led to the director of the clinic later being killed by a pro-life mob, Walter Wink and Michael Hardin, "Response to C. Peter Wagner and Rebecca Greenwood," in *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, eds. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012), 200–203.

61 Währisch-Oblau, "Spiritual Warfare," 16.

5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has discussed the practice of spiritual warfare through the case of a Pentecostal minority in Muslim-dominated Zanzibar. I have argued that it is the commitment to a spiritual war aimed at unveiling elements of evil in Zanzibar society which drives the CCC as a public culture—meaning that spiritual warfare should be seen as the lens through which the world is interpreted as well as the method by which the world's tangible reality is undressed. In Geertzian terms spiritual warfare works not only as a model *of* the world but also *for* the world in a highly normative sense.⁶² For the small CCC minority, spiritual warfare provides a framework for individuals, already largely perceived as outsiders due to their mainland origins, not only to resist social pressure to adapt but also to oppose the surrounding Muslim majority. In the CCC's interpretations, the violence directed against Christians is seen as a symptom, as well as a proof, of the efficacy of such practices. In other words, forceful prayers and acts of spiritual warfare can be seen to carve out political space in the public realm, providing CCC members with a political identity that not only aims to take control of both social time and space but also produce alternative sites of social belonging.⁶³ The identity produced by perceiving “themselves as extremely powerful in the spiritual realm and thereby expect[ing] to effect positive changes on the social and material level”⁶⁴ points to the role of spiritual practices in collective mobilization and identity formation. In the highly politicized Zanzibar context, where social locations and religious belonging have become deeply entrenched in the Union-Zanzibar controversy, this turns theological and religious practices into politically significant actions.

Approaching spiritual warfare as the hermeneutical key through which Pentecostals filter social experiences of alienation, discrimination, and violence, the chapter therefore suggests that spiritual warfare and the discourse of victory which permeates Pentecostal praxis provides a fruitful example of how an exposed Christian minority engages with the public and partakes in wider political contestations. With the narrative of Christian growth also discursively used among Union-critical Muslim agents in Zanzibar, the Christians' notion that they are agents of change not only seizes public space but also significance.

62 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures : Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

63 Yong, *In the Days*, 156–159.

64 Währisch-Oblau, “Spiritual Warfare,” 16.

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