

mission-educated and mine workers, for instance – and clamored to represent ‘authentic’ natives. South Africanists will surely have other critiques. Yet anyone interested in the politics of knowledge about Africa should read this book and consider for herself whether knowledge and knowledge-production have been decolonized.

Criticisms notwithstanding, this book challenges scholars of any field that relies on comparison – who do we cite and what counts as evidence and as expertise? It lays bare the incestuous acts of scholarly citation and recitation by reminding us of the materiality, multiple meanings, and power relations of cultural encounters in Africa.

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## PENTECOSTAL GLOBALITY AND ISLAMIC CONSTRAINTS

*Pentecostalism, Globalisation, and Islam in Northern Cameroon: Megachurches in the Making?*

By Tomas Sundnes Drønen.

Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2013. Pp. x + 260. \$149, hardback (ISBN 9789004244894).

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**Key Words:** Cameroon, Christianity, globalisation, Islam, religion.

The scholarship on Pentecostalism in sub-Saharan Africa has to some extent absorbed Pentecostals’ own superlative rhetoric, representing this religious movement as a mass phenomenon. Although empirically grounded, this tendency might fail to reflect the complexities of particular religious fields: geographical variations; the resilience of mainline churches; the growth and diversification of Islam; as well as, the dazzling variability of Pentecostal projects. Tomas Drønen’s elegantly-written *Pentecostalism, Globalisation, and Islam in Northern Cameroon* explores precisely the intricacies of Pentecostal reterritorialization in Africa. The book is neither a study of religious conflict between Christianity and Islam, which has remained rare in this region, nor a detailed empirical study of religious pluralism. It is an ethnographic investigation about the Pentecostal renewal in a context of Islamic hegemony: Ngaoundéré, the capital city of the Adamawa region. In order to plant churches in such rocky soil, Pentecostals must acknowledge the constraining force of Islam and, thus, accommodate their global drive toward radical change to a specific setting. This process of contextualization endows Ngaoundéré’s new churches with specific countenances that, according to Drønen, never simply dissipate their global inclination.

The book’s structure mimes nicely this plea for situatedness, scaling down slowly. Chapter One and Two are careful overviews of, respectively, theories of globalization and religion and Pentecostal studies in Africa. Chapter Three is a historical analysis of the relations between religion and politics in Northern Cameroon that traces Ngaoundéré’s transformation along the twentieth century from a Muslim city governed by the Fulbe *lamido* into a multiethnic and multi-religious setting. Some important particularities of the Cameroonian religious field are also introduced: the lack of an African Independent Church tradition; the recent arrival of European missionaries to the North; and, how Islam’s territorial control over this region became looser with the transition

from Ahidjo's to Biya's regime and the establishment of rights of free association after the country's democratization.

Chapter Four is a general picture of the Pentecostal scene in Ngaoundéré through a sample of twelve different pastoral projects. These are humble churches hosting no more than two hundred members. They emerged in relative alienation from direct Anglophone flows coming from America and Nigeria, although alternative connections with Benin and Germany are active. Members and leaders are predominantly migrants from Southern Cameroon, some of whom have international experience. Are these megachurches in the making? This is, of course, a rhetorical question about futurity with no clear-cut answer, and Drønen tackles it by investigating Pentecostalism as a relatively standardized set of moral, associational, and material resources allowing converts to 'think big'.

Chapter 5 is centered on the life trajectories of three Pentecostal pastors, individuals who accumulated social capital by drawing resources from different 'platforms' (Lauterbach) in order to convert secular skills and opportunities into tools for encouraging Christianity. Drønen's approach to pastoral authority avoids the African exceptionalism implied in notions of bigmanship, defining these men of God as entrepreneurs 'sincerely engaged in a social and spiritual project they believed could transform individuals and thereby the local society' (p. 147). Chapter Six highlights these churches' theological 'self-presentation' and stresses the 'light footedness' of their evangelistic agency, including an interesting comparison between Pentecostal and mainline approaches to radio broadcasting. The investigation of sermon topics and Bible citations provides a productive analytical entrance into Pentecostal attitudes toward Islam and the mainline churches, and to how Pentecostal cosmology is locally inflected according to three emphases: sanctification; election (the notion that God wants you to be 'different'); and, ethical transformation at the level of personal habits, family, and labor relations. Drønen argues that Muslim dominance over economic networks results in a 'mild' approach to prosperity theology in this region.

Chapter Seven shifts from Pentecostalism as a practical theology to Pentecostalism as a social movement, summarizing how these churches reshape local contexts by codifying converts' migration and social mobility experiences. Pentecostal leaders negotiate space and authority with Islam through non-antagonistic and flexible strategies: grassroots evangelism; eventful crusades and conferences; and, by holding increasingly important positions in the state and the market. The impact of Pentecostalism in the city is ultimately grasped through an analysis of testimonies, which reflect the efficacy of Pentecostal promises about a holistic personal transformation of converts into 'somebody'.

The book's main virtue is its capacity to corroborate the globalism of Pentecostalism in Africa without reducing it to a foreign 'export', while approaching locality beyond the register of indigeneity. In order to do so, it deploys a robust notion of Pentecostal imaginary that counters the allure of deprivation theories. I would like to have learned more about these congregations' ethnic configuration and more about Muslim converts, who, however small in numbers, apparently still exist. Nevertheless, by taking Pentecostal discourse as a deterritorialized 'virtuality' (p. 214), whose incompleteness makes it responsive to local constraints, Drønen retains from his exercise of contextualization a fourfold characterization of Pentecostalism based on global mobility, local flexibility, spiritual authority, and human dignity, that deserves to be further tested elsewhere. The book deserves wide readership and provides important contributions to ongoing debates on Pentecostal

networks, relations between Pentecostalism and Islam, prosperity theology, conversion and the ‘break with the past’, and the acquisition and exercise of Pentecostal authority.

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## HUBRIS AND HEALTH

*Global Health in Africa: Historical Perspectives on Disease Control.*

Edited by Tamara Giles-Vernick and James L. A. Webb, Jr.

Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2013. Pp. viii + 246. \$80, hardback (ISBN 978-0-8214-2067-6); \$32.95, paperback (ISBN 978-0-8214-2068-3).

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**Key Words:** Environment, health, medicine, science.

As the editors of this volume point out, in the last twenty years Africa has seen considerable growth in the number and financial resources of international organizations concerned with health. Surely this development has contributed to the marked change in the interest that my students bring to the study of Africa. Increasingly, they want to learn about health and disease, often because they hope one day to contribute to health care in Africa. Addressing their interests means placing Africa in the broader context of ‘global health’, a term defined by the editors as ‘the health initiatives launched within Africa by actors based outside of the continent’. *Global Health in Africa* serves this purpose well, for its essays address major problems encountered in teaching from a historical perspective about global health in Africa. One such problem is the view that Africa’s disease burden is an ancient, unyielding condition to whose alleviation indigenous healing systems contribute little. Behind this view lurks the problem of Western constructions of race and cultural difference that diminish empathy for individual experience and curiosity about social context. Out of such assumptions emerge what Guillaume Lachenal calls ‘hubris’ – unqualified confidence in the efficacy of modern biomedicine.

‘Hubris’ is challenged by several contributions which, while acknowledging the undoubted successes of global health initiatives, show too their sometimes inadvertent and harmful outcomes. In Liberia, the use of DDT interrupted the maintenance of human immunological resistance. In Uganda, the distribution of protein-rich skim-milk powder initially seemed to reduce kwashiorkor, but later led to undernutrition and infectious disease in children because it inadvertently popularized bottle-feeding. More disturbing is iatrogenic disease, particularly the epidemic of hepatitis C that has raged in Egypt since the 1990s. It resulted from the mass treatment of schistosomiasis that was implemented, argues Anne Marie Moulin, by an exceptionally coercive system of public health. These and other cases in this volume warn against unconditional confidence in biomedical public health interventions.

Contributions to this volume demonstrate the importance of placing global and public health within specific historical and social circumstances. Efforts to eradicate smallpox in the colonial period, shows William Schneider, were impeded by arbitrary boundaries between colonies and empires. By contrast, conditions characteristic of postcolonial Africa made