

immigrants to struggle and survival on the everyday immigrant terrain, generally fraught by bureaucratic challenges and economic insecurities.

William Tetey, in another impressive article, takes up Ghanaians' translocational positionality in Canada and in their country of origin. In addition to emphasizing the social network and support character of the churches, he brings out the character of some churches as 'niche congregations', which, from their marginal position, display particular concerns with building social capital among the youth. Tetey is one of the few authors who, through focusing on breakaway tendencies under charismatic leadership, address issues of conflict. Through the secessions, Ghanaian communities experience fissures which lead up to politically loaded competition and rivalry.

Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome convincingly argues the case of a mission-oriented immigrant church of Nigerians and their tense relation to the American Christian Right. She highlights the affinities in value systems and the concomitant racial exclusion of the immigrant church's concerns from campaigns launched by the Christian Right. Her point, however, is that, while African churches go unnoticed by the Christian Right and their campaigns to put religious institutions in socially and politically powerful positions, the pastors in particular, whom Okome projects as powerful leaders with a considerable command over their congregations' interests, must be seen as 'interested observers' keen to watch and seize possibilities for the future when the Christian Right may have consolidated the influence it wields over American institutions. Other articles shed light on the multi-faceted expressions of Christianity which today characterize this world religion, in the American immigrant setting as elsewhere. Though the authors refrain from historical perspectives, even the historian gains insights into the different varieties of Christianity, which are, as we know, not only a feature of the present.

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CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS?

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This book in itself forms in some ways a Muslim-Christian encounter as the contributors to the volume have various backgrounds, from historians and islamologists to jurists, but especially as professing Muslims and Christians. This makes not only for different analysis, but also for different viewpoints. While Patrick Ryan SJ could, from his name, be considered to write from a Christian viewpoint on the origins of both religions in Nigeria, Imam Rashied Omar could be considered to represent a similar style of religiously engaged scholarship in his discussion of post-apartheid South Africa. But in both papers the academic largely prevails over the religious. Referring to poetry and anarchist theory, these two authors seem almost bent on hiding their respective affiliations, despite declaring them in the author blurbs.

The volume is a little unbalanced in its regional focus on West Africa, with four out of eleven contributions dealing with Nigeria and two more on Senegal and Mali, while three papers deal with East Africa, covering Sudan, Ethiopia and

Kenya/Tanzania. However, the book's contributions cover most of the domains where Muslims and Christians have encounters, from the market place and the dinner table in Ethiopia described by Ficquet, to the legal courts of Nigeria described by Ostien and Kogelmann. Of course the major encounter is that of direct appeal to each other's beliefs – the religious mission (*da'wa*) – and this subject receives ample attention, ranging from the individual life history of a Muslim convert to Christianity, to the tense debates of comparative religion in Kenya and Tanzania.

A number of papers deal directly or indirectly with the 'Clash of civilizations' theme brought up by Huntington, with the introduction by Soares and Voll's perspective on Muslim–Christian encounters through a World History lens being the most prominent. One of the many problems with Huntington's use of the word 'civilization' is that what he really means is 'empire' in the Hardt and Negri sense of the term. In nineteenth-century Africa, Muslim political realms could be seen as such, and so, of course, could the colonial enterprises conquering them: a moment in which the seeds of (some) Christian–Muslim encounters were planted. This period is not discussed (and then either dismissed or accepted) as a possible 'civilizational clash' in this volume, which is a strange omission once the term is brought up.

Although all papers manage to undermine effectively the notion of 'civilization', 'clash' remains a dominant theme, the importance of which becomes most poignant in Chesworth's paper on Christian and Muslim missionary outreach in East Africa, and in Sharkey's paper on Christian missions in Egypt and Sudan. Chesworth focuses on the anti-Muslim contents of some Christian preaching, and vice versa. He describes how *mihadhara* – public debates on comparative theology organized by Muslim preachers – are quite often forbidden by the authorities for fear of religious riots. The long-term consequences of missionary work in the political and public realm come best to the fore in Sharkey's contribution on Christian missions in Egypt and Sudan. Sharkey states that, at present, Islamists use texts from long-deceased missionaries to prove that Islam and Christianity are indeed clashing civilizations. A number of papers, such as Searing's on the Senegalese Serer and Shankar's on a Muslim convert, deal with conversions. Searing effectively shows that conversion can cause clashes both in local political settings and in the more far-reaching contexts of colonial conquest and rule. Perhaps we could even call these clashes of civilizations after all. An exception to the theme of mission and conversion as igniters of violence is presented in Shankar's paper on the life of a Muslim convert in Nigeria, which stresses the possibilities for acceptance and co-existence. These three papers on mission and conversion together are telling for the clash of realities between studying individual micro-histories and discourse-based analysis of mass movements. While, in the public space of law and politics, religions clash, as is further proven in Ostiens and Kogelmann's papers on the Shari'a debate in Nigeria, individual believers might find paths of accommodation – to borrow the title of David Robinson's book on a similar subject – however narrow they may be.

On a critical note: an important issue not dealt with is the growing number of interreligious encounters caused by migration or refuge. The political situation in Ivory Coast, where *Ivoirité* is considered incompatible with Islam, is a case in point, but the rapidly growing African migrant communities in Algeria and Libya too beg the study of the religious dimension of their relations with the local population.