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Hasu, P 2023, 'Politics of Spiritual Warfare : The Making of a Pentecostal Big Man in Tanzania', Journal of Religion in Africa, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 21–52. https://doi.org/10.1163/15700666-12340242

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Politics of Spiritual Warfare—The Making of a Pentecostal Big Man in Tanzania

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Abstract

This article examines the transformation of Pastor Josephat Gwajima of the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church in Dar es Salaam into a Pentecostal Big Man characterized by neopatrimonialism and clientelism. It argues that Pastor Gwajima's status rests first, on religious mediation and individual as well as collective deliverance, and second, on the long-term creation of a Christian electorate. The paper focuses on Gwajima's political activism during election campaigns that culminated in the 2020 elections when he became a member of parliament. The article concludes that Gwajima has built his religiopolitical profile on popular discourses of suspicion, witchcraft, and conspiracies, and that his Pentecostal politics expand the field of political power beyond political institutions to include demonic entities. Gwajima spiritually mediates people's failed efforts to participate in the world of development while acknowledging the national and global inequalities, power asymmetries, and associated moral problems resulting from material and power accumulation.

Key words: Pentecostalism, politics, elections, Big Men, religious mediation, Tanzania

Introduction

Like most other countries, Tanzania was hard-hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The ruling president during the outbreak, John Pombe Magufuli of the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the governing party since independence, was a former chemistry teacher with a Ph.D., and a Covid skeptic who initially declared Tanzania a Covid-free country. Magufuli dismissed science, raised doubts over Western-produced vaccines, and declared that God was protecting Tanzania from the virus (Harris 2021). He maintained notions about plots to harm Tanzanians and expressed doubt about the safety of masks and vaccines. Tanzanians were to rely on prayer instead. In February 2021 he finally admitted publicly that the virus existed in the country. In the meantime, several top leaders, including the Zanzibari vice-president, the chief secretary to the Cabinet, the governor of the Central Bank, several judges, cabinet ministers, and members of parliament, had succumbed to the virus. Eventually President Magufuli's own demise on 17 March 2021 was blamed on 'heart problems' but it is commonly speculated that he died of Covid-19 (BBC 2021a, 2021b).

After Magufuli's death and the ascent of Vice-President Samia Suluhu Hassan to the office, the handling of the pandemic changed drastically. However, the populist approach to the pandemic and its prevention was taken up by a first-term CCM MP from the Kawe constituency in Dar es Salaam, the Pentecostal-Charismatic[1] Bishop Josephat Gwajima of the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church (GCTC). He had begun his religious activities in the public political space more than a decade before he ran for parliament, by which time he was a leading Pentecostal-Charismatic figure with a group of loyal followers and huge wealth amassed through his ministry. His public activities display a carefully choreographed mission to extend religious power from the confines of his congregation to the political sphere. After Magufuli's death, he took the stage by making several public speeches and sermons on the dangers of Covid vaccines.

While it is important to recognize the lived experiences of the global pandemic on the ground, the argument in this article also acknowledges the pandemic and other events as potential sources of discourses of suspicion and conspiracy. In keeping with Magufuli's legacy of skepticism toward science and the motives of Western countries, Gwajima told his congregation that Tanzanians should reject the vaccination because it could harm their cognitive functions and turn them into zombies, and that Western nations promoting the global vaccination campaign had an evil agenda: 'If white people give you something for free, be sure that they are expecting to get something in return. … People taking the vaccines risk becoming mentally challenged or monitored by computers from the West' (*The Citizen* 2021a). Indeed, Gwajima claimed that vaccines carry microchips with an identification number that would be used to track and control people; vaccination, in his mind, was part of a conspiracy to create a 'new world order' wherein some nations would perish (BBC 2021d). This resonates with an earlier Freemasonry conspiracy theory of a 'new world order' that circulated in the country from the mid-2000s, an imaginary associated with the white man's economy and neocolonial governance that impose the exploitative structures in which ordinary Tanzanians live (Hasu 2015). In fact, Gwajima also advocated this conspiratorial vision of Freemasonry at his church in 2016.[2]

Who is this high-profile Charismatic pastor-politician, and how is one to understand these populist statements about Western conspiracies, zombies, and the 'new world order'? By exploring answers to these questions, I aim to contribute to understandings of contemporary Pentecostal politics in Tanzania and Africa in general. I address two interrelated issues. First, I scrutinize Gwajima's career, which I have followed since the early 2000s (Hasu 2009a, 2009b, 2012), situating the case in the context of major religiopolitical events in the country. I undertook four months of ethnographic fieldwork in Dar es Salaam in 2007-2008 and in Tanga in 2013.

During interim periods I followed his political development on various media.[3] Second, I explore his theological practice, especially his notion of spiritual warfare, and how this interacts with his political activities. The discussion draws from research on Pentecostalism and politics in postcolonial African societies, particularly from features of neopatrimonialism and Big Men, and the Pentecostal practices of spiritual warfare and religious mediation.

Tanzania is formally a secular state, but the religious demography of Christians and Muslims is a politically sensitive matter and the government does not survey faith affiliation in the census. However, religious leaders are frequently consulted, thus influencing secular societal affairs, and many become politically important due to the number of their followers. There is also nothing new or unique to Africa about politicians who seek to capitalize on displays of religious affiliation (Ellis and Tar Haar 1998; Gifford 1998). Politicians frequently seek support from religious groups, although in Tanzania this is a highly disputed activity (*Daily News* 2015c). Some of the key accounts of religion and politics in Tanzania have dealt with church-state relations from an institutional perspective in the plural religious setting of mainline Christianity and Islam (Westerlund 1980; Luanda 1996; Ludwig 1999; Wijsen and Mfumbusa 2004; Mbogoni 2005; Mukandala et al. 2006), although the role of Pentecostal leaders in the political arena has received much less scholarly attention.[4] This is also the case with Pentecostal religious ideas on Christian-Muslim antagonism (cf. Olsson 2019). Elsewhere, the political role of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity has been widely debated (Marshall 2009; Bompani 2016; Deacon 2015; Obadare 2006; Haynes 2018; Heuser 2014; Yong 2010). Haynes (2018; also Green 2006) distinguishes between somewhat essentialist approaches that foreground the role of religion in African political thought (Ellis and Ter Haar 1998, 2004, 2007), and approaches that see political economy as the driving force behind religious discourse (Comaroff and Comaroff

1999, 2000; Comaroff 2009). In response, authors such as Robbins (2013), Englund (2011), and Haynes (2015) have called for approaches that examine how Christian ideas or practices constitute politics rather than merely respond to it.

In African postcolonial states politics has long been associated with Big Men, forms of neopatrimonialism, and patron-client relations (Hyden 2013; Bayart 2009). It has been argued that because postcolonial states have failed to provide social services such as health care and education to their citizens, patron-client relations have emerged to deal with the void. Becoming part of a clientelist network is a means of gaining assistance and welfare in the situation of societal uncertainty that results from failing public institutions (McCauley 2012; Erdmann and Engel 2007). On the other hand, Big Men need to accumulate wealth and resources because in economies of affection (Hyden 2013) a display of wealth is a manifestation of power that reassures their followers of their capacity to provide for and satisfy a network of dependents (Daloz 2003). The accumulation and ostentatious presentation of titles and positions are also a route to fulfilling aspirations for visibility, powerful positions, and leadership (Daloz 2003; McCauley 2012). In such systems clientelism implies an asymmetric and vertical relationship between unequals, a patron and a client, while patronage refers to the relationship between an individual and a larger group (Erdmann and Engel 2007). In the postcolonial context the state is typically seen as the source of resources.

Big Men have also been identified in Pentecostal churches (Gifford 2004; Maxwell 1998; Marshall 2009; Kalu 2008; McCauley 2012; Lauterbach 2016; Haynes 2018), particularly in churches in which the prosperity gospel is prioritized over deliverance and healing. This finding resonates with observations of rich superstar pastors and megachurches (McCauley 2012). In the conventional Big Man model clients are paid in material resources and patrons are rewarded with

loyalty and allegiance. However, in the payoff structure and patron-client relations of such churches as the GCTC, which do not preach the prosperity gospel, reciprocities such as deliverance may be immaterial in nature. Pastors draw financial resources in the form of tithes from congregants as well as from external Pentecostal ties, but they provide for their audience in mostly immaterial terms by communicating between individuals and the supernatural and by delivering clients from evil (Asamoah-Gyadu 2012; Haynes 2018; McCauley: 2012). This Pentecostal Big Man institution demonstrates the clientelist as well as the patrimonial dimension since it serves both individual and collective redemption (Erdmann and Engel 2007).

Spiritual warfare is a set of practices and discourses that aim to battle with and deliver victims from invisible supernatural threats, a notion based on the ontological premise that wicked, nonhuman agents are capable of interfering in human life, and spiritual warfare is the Christian means of taking a stand against such forces (Marshall and Prichard 2020). As a conventional practice of engaging with the nonhuman realm spiritual warfare can be deployed by Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in many contexts, but in traditional ontologies it describes the battle against dangers inflicted by agents such as witches and diverse spirits in the generic category of the 'demonic' (Meyer 1999; Marshall and Prichard 2020). It is also used against the ills of modernity such as amoral secular Europe (Krause 2015), the demonic potential of modern technologies like cell phones and the Internet (Pype 2017), and Covid-19 vaccinations (as discussed in this article).[5]

Some of the literature on spiritual warfare focuses on the way it has been localized, mentioning, for example, the ease with which Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has been incorporated into traditional threatening ontologies in the new contexts in which it is adopted. Consequently, it has been maintained that at its core spiritual warfare represents a type of

continuity (Marshall and Prichard 2020). However, other scholars have argued that the focus on the localization of spiritual warfare detracts from attempts to break away from the past (Meyer 1999). Indeed, one of the perils of continuity thinking is that it may conflict with the reality of communities that openly declare their intention to participate in projects of change (Robbins 2003).

In the following discussion I examine Bishop Josephat Gwajima's project of self-creation as a Big Man, analysing his political career and the creative set of religious practices, including spiritual warfare, that have become politically significant. The first focus is the theology of spiritual warfare and religious mediation at the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church, followed by the historical context of comparative preaching and political contestation between Christians and Muslims—the backdrop against which Josephat Gwajima's actions are to be placed. The general elections of 2010 are discussed as the first public arena in which Bishop Gwajima waged spiritual warfare against Islam. By the 2015 elections he was already a public political Big Man who was involved in party politics, and in 2020 he finally had a successful run for parliament.

Glory of Christ Tanzania Church—Religious Mediation and Political Spirituality

Today there are a number of independent, third-wave Pentecostal-Charismatic churches and ministries in Dar es Salaam, either characterized by the prosperity gospel or more inclined toward deliverance and healing, such as the GCTC (e.g., Hasu 2006; 2007; 2009a, 2009b; 2012) Generally these third-wave churches are locally referred to as 'spiritual churches' (*makanisa ya kiroho*). One of the first, the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship, was established in Dar es Salaam in 1989 by Bishop Zachary Kakobe. The Efatha Church is led by Apostle and Prophet Josephat Mwingira who is also known as an experienced businessman (Hasu 2007). The Assemblies of

God, Mikocheni-B, was led by Dr. Gertrude Rwakatare, who placed considerable emphasis on material wealth (Dilger 2009). Rwakatare, who succumbed to Covid in 2020, was the first high-profile Pentecostal pastor to be appointed as a 'special-seat'[6] member of parliament in 2007 but was a much more low-key politician than Josephat Gwajima. Indeed, no other pastor-politician has become a public figure to the same extent.

Bishop Gwajima was spiritually brought up in the Assemblies of God before making the decision to leave in 1994 and establish the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church, also known as the Church of Resurrection and Life. As is also common for many other religious entrepreneurs, Gwajima became discontented with the authority structures of his mother church and developed a vision of an independent church of his own making and under his leadership. He studied at a Bible school in Nairobi during the 1990s and later started churches in Musoma and Mwanza, but, according to him, he was called by God to Dar es Salaam in 1997 to start a church, today located in the suburb of Ubungo on the road to Morogoro. By 2022 the number of his adherents had grown to an estimated 70,000. He successfully created international networks and church branches in Asia, particularly in Japan and South Korea, and by 2010 he had organized conferences in Indonesia, Taiwan, Pakistan, and India. In addition to Asia, he has preached in Switzerland, Germany, the United States, and many African countries.

It is difficult to estimate his exact wealth, but public displays indicate that, at least by 2013, he owned a red Hummer vehicle, 40 cars used by his pastors, 20 buses used to drive people to the church, and a helicopter with which to spread the gospel. In 2017 he reportedly purchased an aircraft for the same purpose for 2.64 billion Tsh (*Mwananchi* 2017). He has also increased his titles over the years and now calls himself Bishop Gwajima.[7] He reports having a master's degree from the Japan Bible Institute, which the Tanzanian educational authorities do

not recognize, and a Ph.D. from the Omega Global University, South Africa, a college that provides honorary doctorates based on 'life experience' (Josephat Gwajima International Ministry; Zoutnet 2010). As of 2022 he has over 500,000 followers on Instagram and at least 19,000 on Twitter. The GCTC has an extensive system of video production and recordings that are uploaded to YouTube. These social media activities have made Gwajima a household name in Tanzania, and his sermons are frequently commented on in social and Christian media as well as in mainstream newspapers. The church does not provide any significant social services for adherents whereby resources could be redistributed.

Compared to many other new Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Dar es Salaam such as Efatha, the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship, and the Assemblies of God Mikocheni B, many GCTC adherents are relatively underprivileged people of low socioeconomic standing. Judging by the general appearance of the audience, most churchgoers are women, and adherents come from diverse ethnic backgrounds and denominations. The general cultural, social, and religious setting of the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church is metropolitan coastal Tanzania, with a population that represents all ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations.

Pentecostal theologian Nimi Wariboko (2012) identifies five key Pentecostal paradigms of national economic prosperity, three of which frame the message of the gospel at GCTC. The teachings mostly reflect the spiritual paradigm in which spiritual forces, demons, and the devil are seen to hold people back; however, the gospel also resonates with the leadership paradigm whereby problems of national prosperity are related to immoral leadership. The solution posed by this model is 'for morally upright Christians to access legitimate power and authority. The whole goal of transformational leadership in political and economic development is the election of Christian believers into public offices' (Wariboko 2012, 45-51). The nationalist paradigm

frequently appears in Gwajima's references to the legacy of colonialism and the North's exploitation of postcolonial societies. From the Pentecostal perspective, the election of Christian believers into public offices is particularly crucial in a multireligious country where Christian believers categorize Islam as evil.

At GCTC the prosperity gospel plays a minor role, with only standard biblical references to the importance of tithing, while the heart and foundation of the teaching is the individual and collective redemption of delivering people from the powers of darkness. In my previous work I described in more detail Gwajima's spiritual mediation, his deliverance practices, and the personal testimonies by former zombies (Hasu 2009a, 2009b, 2012). At this church spiritual warfare and deliverance form the core of the gospel and are at the centre of teaching, preaching, and personal testimonies. Witches, witchcraft, and various categories of spirits represent the satanic in opposition to the power of the Holy Spirit and the name and the blood of Jesus. Elaborate ideas are presented by both the pastor and churchgoers in their testimonies of witches that capture people and turn them into zombies (*msukule* sg. / *misukule* pl.)[8] to use them as their nocturnal labour force. However, the congregation, together with its pastor, is believed to be able to outdo the witches through prayer and deliverance, and bring the zombies back into the world of the living. Discourses of witchcraft, suspicion, and conspiracies have been connected and well documented in literature on sub-Saharan Africa where various misfortunes have been interpreted by way of maleficent forces such as occult powers and secret societies (Geschiere 1997; Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Fassin 2021). It has also been widely argued that engagement with the demonic is central to the Pentecostal-Charismatic program of redemption and at the heart of the project of both individual and collective overcoming, with the imagery of spiritual warfare being transposed and projected from the individual soul and experience to the public and

collective realm of the entire globe (Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001; Meyer 2010; Lindhardt 2011). Through the politics of conviction—of convicting and overcoming the Other—the Other is identified with the demonic that needs to be destroyed in order for collective salvation and redemption to take place (Marshall 2009).

Conceptions of demonic powers are based on elements from the biblical narratives of the Old and New Testaments, and also on ethnic Sukuma concepts of witchcraft, the complexities of the occult, and the numerous spirit categories (*pepo, jinni*) in the coastal areas of Tanzania (Mesaki 1993; Giles 1999).[9] Gwajima's general mission is based on verse 10: 8 in the Gospel of Matthew: 'Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give'.[10] Meanwhile, Ephesians 6: 12 is frequently cited to describe the nature of the enemy: 'For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places'. Gwajima draws extensively from the Bible to support his views on not only spiritual warfare and witches but also the resurrection. One of his favourite catchphrases is Exodus 22: 18: 'Do not allow a sorceress to live'. He finds literal evidence from the Old Testament book of Isaiah (42: 22) for his description of zombies, one that echoes African perceptions of zombies' labour exploitation (Niehaus 2005): 'But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say: Send them back'.[11] When I first interviewed Pastor Gwajima on 3 July 2007, he told me that raising people from the dead and 'returning'[12] zombies were his main aspirations: 'The Lord started teaching me how to raise people from the dead in the ministry. There are people whom [sic] you think are dead, but they are not dead'. Gwajima was convinced that 'we will see dead people

getting alive and being resurrected. It is not just *misukule* but people who are really dead'. Witches are believed to cause deaths and turn people into *misukule,* but it is possible to 'return' them and to raise the dead by repeating the words Jesus pronounced to raise Lazarus from the dead.

Another core front of spiritual warfare is Islam, although that is not unique to this church. Gwajima began portraying Islam and Muslims to his congregation in terms of spiritual warfare well ahead of the October 2010 general election. Within his church redeemed Muslim converts were considered evidence of GCTC's superior spiritual power and successful spiritual warfare. Preaching that compared Muslims and Christians often took place during church services, and Muslim converts appeared to be particularly fruitful sources of testimony on the perceived satanic nature of Islam. On 27 May 2007 Pastor Gwajima invited a converted Muslim, Pastor Paul (Hamisi) Hussein Mubarak, to speak to the congregation. According to Hussein's own introduction, he studied in Iran, has three Islamic degrees, is titled doctor, and used to be a Shehe[13] before he was saved. In introducing him Pastor Gwajima contrasted some features of Islam and Christianity in terms of spiritual warfare, referring to Muslim preaching in comparative terms:

> The servants in the kingdom of Jesus are many; they do their service by the blood of Jesus and by the name of Jesus. In the kingdom of darkness the servants are medicine men [*waganga wa kienyeji*], witches, astrologers [*wasoma nyota* such as Sheikh Yahya Hussein], soothsayers [*watabiri*] and those who fly with winnowing baskets. … Muslims say that Jesus is not God. If you are [a] Muslim and you are here, you better run away fast; run away to the kingdom of darkness. (video of the service on 27 May 2007)

Hussein's testimony at the church service claimed spiritual warfare was manifested in the actions of spirits, *majini*, against Christians. He referred to the Koran and described how Mohammed gave orders to the *majini* that worked for him. They were to enter those who believed in Jesus to prevent them from taking their Bibles when going to church, putting money aside to buy Bibles to access the word of God, or giving money to the church for fundraising. He also pointed out the deceitful nature of the Muslim God and the Prophet compared to the Christian God and Jesus:

> The God that we worship is not the God that they worship at the mosque. The God that the Muslims worship congratulates those who tell lies. ... Mohammed said that he cannot read. A person who cannot read is ignorant. There are two leaders for Muslims: the God who is a liar and the prophet Mohammed who is ignorant. It is said in the Koran that Mohammed was not able to read and was therefore ignorant. … If a liar and a fool lead you, where will you end up? They will send you to hell. Jesus is not a liar; Jesus is not a fool. (video of the service on 27 May 2007)

Hussein has posted a number of videos on YouTube, including 'Islam to Christianity' and 'Break the Power of Islam and the Spirits'.[14] The Muslim community regards his allegations that Islam is a religion of witchcraft and evil spirits as blasphemous (*kashfa*) and insulting, and has posted several countercritical videos on YouTube.[15]

This was the message from the pulpit about the demonic nature of spirituality in Islam, mediating the Christian experience of deliverance from the satanic. This comparative reading of

the holy scriptures reflects the more general phenomenon of comparative preaching by Christians and Muslims that has been a common phenomenon in the multireligious country of Tanzania for several decades. On this occasion it took place within the confines of the congregation, but Josephat Gwajima was soon to take this practice out in the open, as I describe in the following paragraphs.

It was the sudden death of a young, high-profile Muslim politician and MP, Amina Chifupa, on 26 June 2007 that eventually brought the GCTC into the limelight and into the public consciousness of politics, Islam, and the occult. Her death and subsequent public speculations about it displayed a transformation of spiritual warfare from the personal to the public and political realm (Marshall 2009). Aged only 26, Muslim by family background, and a special-seats MP who represented the ruling CCM's youth wing, Chifupa was a celebrity. Her life was closely followed in the media, not least because of the war she was waging against drug trafficking in the country. Speculations about the cause of her death sprang up wherever people met—whether in government offices, lunch restaurants, or *daladala* busses—and ranged from murder perpetrated by her powerful enemies, the drug lords, to HIV/AIDS related causes (Swahili Time 2007), to the 'Kiswahili illness', a euphemism for becoming a victim of the occult (Habari Tanzania 2007). In November 2007 the GCTC spread rumours that Amina had been turned into a *msukule* at a sugarcane farm in Kibaha district outside Dar es Salaam. The news was based on the public testimony of a young girl who claimed that she had met Amina Chifupa while in a state of *msukule*, and that the former MP was left behind when the girl herself was brought back by the prayers at the church. This testimony eventually reached Amina Chifupa's family and, according to well-informed sources at the church, the family came to the church to ask for help. Amina's mother was reportedly told that if she believed and if she wanted, prayers

could be performed to bring Amina back (Jamii Forums 2007). Sources close to the top leadership of the church claimed that this request for help even reached the president's office. It was claimed that the president's inner circle contacted Pastor Gwajima to appeal for noninterference in the matter: 'It would be better if you did nothing about the case because if Amina was brought back, the case would continue causing further havoc in the country'.[16] The postscript to Amina Chifupa's connection with the church was probably written in February 2009 when the speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, Hon. Samuel Sitta, visited the church. One can only speculate about the reasons for his call. It was evident, however, that the spiritual warfare waged at the Glory of Christ Church had reached broad public and political consciousness by this time. The Tanzanian media has since recognized that Gwajima was deeply involved in politics long before the public realized it. In 2012 he initiated a weekly programme titled 'Our Leader's Wisdom' to host senior government officials and political leaders to discuss issues of national interest at his church (*Daily News* 2012).

Thus a core practice of the politically charged theology of Josephat Gwajima, particularly its spiritual dimension, is deliverance from the powers of evil, be that Islam or witches that turn people into zombies. For individuals deliverance is an intangible form of reciprocity between the patron and the client, a process whereby the pastor mediates between the individual, the Holy Spirit, and the forces of darkness. On the other hand, waging spiritual warfare with Islam is a form of collective deliverance and redemption in the fashion of patrimonialism (Erdman and Engel 2007). The national and leadership paradigms will become more evident as the discussion unfolds.

Comparative Preaching and Religious Tensions in Tanzania

An important aspect of Josephat Gwajima's political self-creation and collective spiritual mediation for his followers is his constant demonization of Islam. While this had previously taken place within the confines of the congregation, Gwajima's involvement in public religio-political debates ahead of the 2010 general election can be seen as a continuation of the confrontations between Christians and Muslims in Tanzania that started several decades earlier.[17] Tensions were first accentuated around 1984 by the development of a new type of public preaching, the so-called *mihadhara*[18] sermons based on comparative readings of the holy scriptures from both faith traditions (Njozi 2000). This comparative preaching involved the use of the Bible to criticize Christianity from the Muslim point of view. The *mihadhara* sermons revived an old dialogue on the fundamental differences between Islam and Christianity in terms of human access to knowledge about God and the nature of Jesus Christ as the son of God (Mbogoni 2005).

The *mihadhara* movement has been portrayed as a reaction to the rise of Pentecostal churches, which started this kind of public preaching (Mbogoni 2005; Loimeier 2007; Chesworth 2009). During the 1980s crusades and rallies took place on the open grounds of Mnazi Mmoja and Jangwani in Dar es Salaam.[19] These were characterized by an insistence on miraculous powers and healing, and usually ended with a call for people to make a decision for Christ. On the other hand, it has also been argued that the *mihadhara* of the 1990s were driven by the perceived disadvantage of Muslims in society (Mbogoni 2005: 19). Whatever the case, a number of Christians responded by organizing rallies at which ridicule of the Prophet Mohammed and Islam became the order of the day (Tambila and Rubanza 2006).

Several public confrontations took place, resulting in heightened tensions and violence. In April 1993 Muslims attacked three pork butcheries in Dar es Salaam that were in Muslim

neighbourhoods. Sheikh Yahya Hussein, the founder of the National Association for the Promotion of the Koran in Tanzania (BALUKTA, *Baraza la Uendelezaji Kuran Tanzania*) publicly declared that he had been the driving force behind the riot, and he was subsequently taken to court (Loimeier 2007; Ludwig 1996). In February 1998, in the so-called Mwembechai killings in Dar es Salaam, four Muslims were killed outside a mosque after a priest told the police that Muslims had insulted Jesus Christ in a *mihadhara* sermon (Heilman and Kaiser 2002; Loimeier 2007).[20] Yet another incident was the conviction in July 2001 of Hamisi Dibagula, a Muslim preacher from Morogoro, for allegedly insulting the Christian religion by stating that Jesus was not the son of God (Loimeier 2007). Although the Tanzanian government banned preaching outside of places of worship in 1992 because it often involved polemical attacks on other religions, *mihadhara* preaching continued to be legal inside churches and mosques (Loimeier 2007).

Compounding socioeconomic factors, other long-term causes behind the tensions have been the issue of joining international organizations, especially the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC);[21] the denial of the right to form autonomous Muslim organizations besides the government-controlled National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA, *Baraza Kuu la Waislamu Tanzania*); the government's refusal to set up Islamic *kadhi* courts; and the alleged demographic distortion of the real number of Muslims in Tanzania, which Muslims claim constitute the majority (Lodi and Westerlund 1999). The Muslim establishment argued that the *kadhi* courts were a historical legacy that had existed in Tanzania until 1965 before the independence government unilaterally abolished them (Minnucci 2015), and in 1998 Muslims began to campaign for their reinstatement. The CCM manifesto for the 2005 elections stated the setting up of these courts as its aim. That same year a new president, Jakaya Kikwete, a Muslim

from the mainland, was elected to office. Following challenges from the CMM opposition regarding the intentions of the government, President Kikwete distanced himself and the government from the proposal in November 2007 when he spoke at the installation of the head of the Lutheran Church (Chesworth 2009). In August 2008 the parliament debated the setting up of the courts and was unable to agree on the way forward. In October 2008 in the face of the perceived threat, the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT), the national organization of Protestant churches, and the Pentecostal churches submitted a petition to the government signed by about 60 church leaders[22] (*Nipashe* 2008) demanding that *kadhi* courts should not be reinstated because they would lead to an increase in religious tension. Josephat Gwajima also viciously attacked the institution of *kadhi* courts.

In October 2010 President Jakaya Kikwete ran for a second term. The general election revived the debate about *kadhi* courts, one that became a public contestation of power between a few Muslim and Pentecostal leaders over the righteous leadership of the nation. From the Pentecostal point of view, it was a matter of spiritual warfare against a perceived evil. One of the most salient charismatic leaders in this campaign was Bishop Josephat Gwajima.

'Tanzania needs God-fearing Leaders at the State House'

During the months preceding the October 2010 general election, Gwajima took his most visible and public steps yet to confront local Muslim leaders in the spirit of comparative preaching, which he had previously confined to his own congregation. This contestation was generated by three separate politically and spiritually motivated statements by Sheikh Yahya Hussein, the founder of BALUKTA. Provoked by the sheikh's statements, Gwajima and a few other Pentecostal pastors held a public debate with him primarily through the Christian media. The

debate should be understood from two perspectives: first, it was the most public move so far in Gwajima's long-term plan to mould himself into a political Big Man and build a broad Christian support base that eventually grew into an electorate; and second, it mediated collective spiritual warfare in a patrimonial fashion for his Pentecostal Christian followers, illustrating the paradigm of righteous leadership for the nation (Wariboko 2012).

The public, politically motivated contestation of spiritual authority between Sheikh Yahya Hussein and Pastor Gwajima—initiated by Sheik Yahya Hussein's warnings to those challenging President Jakaya Kikwete at the polls—was reported in the Christian media for a period of almost a year before the 2010 elections. The second phase took place when Yahya Hussein claimed that he had sent spiritual agents to protect President Kikwete. Finally, in the spirit of comparative preaching, Yahya Hussein maintained that in fact Jesus Christ himself was led by the devil. It appears that Gwajima publicly displayed the fear that President Kikwete was under the influence of Yahya Hussein's sinister spiritual forces that would jeopardize righteous authority, leadership, and the entire future of the nation. This is even more interesting because Gwajima was known for his constant criticism of the Kikwete administration.

A few days before Christmas 2009 Yahya Hussein issued a statement to the press about the forthcoming presidential election and predicted victory for President Kikwete. The news was reported in the media:

> Veteran astrologer Sheikh Yahya Hussein has prophesized the formation of a coalition government after [the] next general election following the re-election of President Jakaya Kikwete. Sheikh Yahya was optimistic that the coalition government would not be the Kenyan way nor the Zimbabwean style, though he said the premier's post would go to the

> opposition. The prominent fortune-teller said President Jakaya Kikwete's star was shining brightly and that there were all [the] signs that he would win a landslide victory in the presidential election and that whoever dares to challenge him would die a sudden death. (*The Guardian* 2009)

According to the *Nipashe* newspaper and a few Christian websites, Gwajima issued Yahya Hussein an ultimatum a few days later, declaring at a church service that democracy in Tanzania was in danger if one person was left to decide the fate of the nation against God's will:[23]

> After he has continued doing his job, which is disliked by God, today I pass a sentence that comes from God. You all will know which one of the prophesies is true, that of Sheikh Yahya or that of God. I order Sheikh Yahya to do three things or else he will die suddenly just as he threatened his fellow Tanzanians. (Strictly Gospel 2010)

The first point of the ultimatum was that Sheikh Yahya was to go to the Glory of Christ Church with a prayer of repentance and receive Jesus into his life. The second was that the sheikh was to stop making predictions, which had harmed many innocent people over the years and helped others by means of the forces of darkness. The third was that after Sheikh Yahya became saved, he should confess to the media all the bad things he had done to the people of the nation. Gwajima also emphasized that he supported President Kikwete wholeheartedly, but that it was upsetting that the sheikh was ordering people to not use their democratic rights. Sheikh Yahya

allegedly responded that he had not meant to slander the pastor, but if he wished the pastor could complain to the State House.

These provocative statements generated a debate in the Christian media. It was also speculated whether the State House—and President Kikwete himself—were guided by Sheikh Hussein's fortune-telling. On the Christian websites this debate was conceptualized in terms of spiritual warfare, as one contributor suggested: 'The way I see it is that there are two opposing powers here. … On [the] one hand, there is the Godly power as represented by Pastor Gwajima and on the other, there is the power of stars' (Strictly Gospel 2010). The writer referred to two chapters of the Bible in which fortune-telling is asserted to anger God.[24] The contributor of the blog went further:

> Based on these verses we can see that astrology and fortune-telling do not come from God but that they anger him. … I am not sure how many religious leaders gave their opinions about Sheikh Yahya who wants to lead the country by way of fortune-telling. I know that various Christian leaders continue telling people who believe in God Jesus Christ that they should continue praying so that the state of Tanzania is not led by [the] powers of witchcraft, but rather, revere the living God. The Bible places fortune-telling from the stars and witchcraft in one and the same group. I am not sure what their standing is in this matter when it is revealed openly that powers that are against God lead all the way to the Tanzanian State House. ... Tanzania needs God fearing leaders at the State House, who—in the name of Jesus—oppose the State House and the country being led by those powers that are openly against God. Without God fearing leaders all the dreams about Tanzania achieving development will not materialize. The country will be a ground

> for foreigners if the proprietors are under pacts of darkness that do not allow them to enjoy the creations of God and to enjoy the blessings of God. (Strictly Gospel 2010)

This blog debate, with its themes of leadership and the nation, is indicative of more general Pentecostal-Charismatic understandings of the world as the site of spiritual warfare on Islam and on its practices as representations of the forces of evil. Only righteous and God-fearing leadership can secure the development of the nation. The claims and counterclaims about the use of supernatural powers in the election of the leaders of the nation went on in the media until a few weeks before the general election in October 2010.

Sheikh Yahya Hussein's second statement that provoked the Pentecostal leaders was issued in September, about a month before the election, when Yahya Hussein declared that he had sent spiritual forces to protect President Kikwete. This resonated with the general belief that many African heads of state employ religious experts in their personal entourage to whom they turn for advice, and that such communication with the spirit world may be sinister (Ellis and Tar Haar 1998, 2004). In Tanzania, and more generally in Africa (Rio et al. 2017; Geschiere 1997), the mystical powers of medicine men or witches have been used to explain not only failure or success in politics but also the sudden deaths of prominent political figures, such as Prime Minister Sokoine, Cabinet Minister and CCM Secretary General Kolimba, and, as described above, MP Amina Chifupa (Lawi and Masanja 2006). Understandably, CCM quickly disassociated itself and its presidential candidate from Sheikh Hussein's promised spiritual protection, despite Hussein's response: 'Some people have connected my statement with evil powers but I was referring to *genis* who are creatures like us human beings and they are

mentioned in both the Holy Koran and the Holy Bible. … I know the *geni* are protecting the CHADEMA[25] candidate. … I have seen it' (*Daily News* 2010).

Pastor Gwajima very obviously interpreted this as ongoing spiritual warfare because he was reported to have said that the president is the president of all people. He added that if the president himself had not said anything about having been provided with *majini*, the pastor would have to caution his adherents to avoid candidates who trust in *majini* (*Nyakati* 2010a). President Kikwete's possible association with Yahya's *majini* could prove to be fatally dangerous for the nation as a whole.

It was Sheikh Yahya Hussein's third statement in the spirit of *mihadhara* preaching that lifted the dispute to a new level and generated public comparative reading of the holy scriptures in the Christian press. Less than a fortnight before the election Hussein resurfaced on a Channel Ten television broadcast claiming that not just the presidential candidate but Jesus Christ himself was guided by a spirit (*jinni*) (*Nyakati* 2010b). Hussein allegedly referred to the biblical passage (Matthew 4: 8) that says: 'Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour', which he explained to mean that Jesus himself was led by *jinni*. However, according to the newspaper *Nyakati*, 'this statement by Sheikh Yahya equated himself with Satan because from time immemorial, the task of Satan has been to pervert and to blaspheme (*kuchakachua*) the word of God' (*Nyakati* 2010b).

To fight back in the spiritual realm, several Pentecostal-Charismatic groups launched special prayer sessions to counteract Sheikh Yahya Hussein. As reported by *Nyakati*, these prayer groups 'managed to extinguish the predictions of this 'exorcist' (*mpunga pepo*)' (*Nyakati* 2010c). In the newspaper interview the leader of Prayer Mountain Tanzania and pastor of the Free Pentecostal Church of Tanzania explained: 'We knew that his words were intended to create

fear in the spiritual domain, and that is why we performed prayers in the spiritual realm to extinguish those predictions, so that they would not be materialized'. Another of the participating pastors told *Nyakati* five days before the general election: 'We fasted for three days and prayed, and now we are happy that no-one has died, and the election has taken place. God has answered, and indeed Satan has been destroyed'.

Pastor Gwajima positioned himself in these political debates as one of the key Pentecostal leaders mediating the spiritual warfare against evil and its potential threat to righteous leadership in Tanzania, publicly launching the process of forming himself into a political Big Man with religio-political power. His actions suggest a form of spiritual patronage (Erdmann and Engel 2007) in the Pentecostal payoff structure whereby he displayed the ability to deliver the collective Christian electorate from the powers of evil in a patrimonial fashion, thereby protecting the nation.

The Making of a Political Big Man—The 2015 Elections

Ahead of the 2015 elections, religion and politics were once more intertwined in many ways, despite numerous warnings about the dangers this posed to Tanzanian unity—outgoing president Kikwete warned religious leaders against getting involved in political processes, and church leaders warned politicians against using their pulpits as political platforms (*Daily News* 2015b, 2015c). However, during the period between the 2010 and 2020 elections, Josephat Gwajima was systematically involved in political debates on major issues that included the establishment of *kadhi* courts, the constitutional referendum, and the appointing of presidential candidates by the opposition parties.

Since 2012 Tanzania had been undergoing a constitutional review process, and a constitutional referendum was planned for 30 April 2015 before the October general elections. Joining the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was not on the agenda since the government had dropped it; however, the *kadhi* courts were debated as part of the constitutional reform.[26] In January 2015 Christian leaders from the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT), the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), and the Council of Pentecostal Churches of Tanzania (CPCT) drafted a statement on the amendment of the Islamic law of 1964. They demanded that the government stop the introduction of the courts because of the potential conflicts that they create between Muslims and Christians. The CCM announced that establishing *kadhi* courts was not on the agenda but that Islamic principles would be incorporated into lawmaking by other means.

The country had also become divided over the feasibility and desirability of the constitutional referendum. Although the opposition coalition, UKAWA[27], had instructed its followers to boycott the referendum, it mobilized followers to register as voters. The Tanzania Christian Forum[28] also instructed its followers to register, but to vote against the proposed constitution (Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee 2015a). However, a few Christian leaders, including the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dar es Salaam Polycarp Cardinal Pengo, publicly expressed their disagreement with this policy. Pengo insisted that citizens should be left to choose freely, allowing them to vote without external pressure (*Daily News* 2015a). A few days later a video clip from a church service began circulating in social media that showed Bishop Gwajima slandering Pengo for this opinion and attacking the establishment of *kadhi* courts (Rudisha TV 2015a). Gwajima was then summoned by the Dar es Salaam Special Zone Police for questioning about using defamatory language toward Pengo. Eventually delays in

biometric voter registration led to the postponement of the referendum. As for Gwajima, it seemed that any publicity was good publicity.

After this public row with Cardinal Pengo and other church leaders, Josephat Gwajima placed himself in the political limelight again. According to reports, he was the central figure in efforts to get former Prime Minister Edward Lowassa, who had been forced to resign in 2008 after being implicated in the Richmond Energy corruption scandal, to become the CHADEMA and UKAWA candidate (*The Citizen* 2021b). On the day that CHADEMA launched its campaign at the Jangwani grounds in Dar es Salaam, Lowassa was accompanied by chairpersons of the four political parties that formed UKAWA. A sheikh and Bishop Gwajima led prayers for the campaign (Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee 2015b). Lowassa and Gwajima became close allies in the opposition during the months and weeks ahead of the election, while John Pombe Magufuli became the CCM candidate.

There were also personal attacks on the candidates' use of religion in the election campaign. For example, the CCM claimed that while speaking to the congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, Lowassa had said it was now time for the Lutheran Church to get a president. This message raised polemic and criticism about politicians speaking from pulpits, which again noted that it could lead to the disintegration of national unity among Tanzanians (Mfinanga et al. 2021). The former chairman of the National Electoral Commission, Judge Damian Lubuva, provided a statement pointing out that candidates' use of pulpits was a breach of the 2015 Election Code of Ethics for presidential, parliamentary, and civic election candidates, which prohibits political parties and candidates from asking for votes based on religious, tribal, racial, or gender lines (*Daily News* 2015c).

The close connection between Lowassa and Gwajima did not go unnoticed by the Muslim community either. On 24 September 2015 the Imam Bukhary Islamic Foundation issued a statement wherein Lowassa was taken to task for his statements about the Lutheran Church getting a president and Gwajima was challenged for opposition to *kadhi* courts and 'his unfulfilled dream of seeing Tanzanian mosques turned into 'Sunday Schools' for children, with sheikhs and Imams rushing to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ [to be baptized]' (Jamii Forums 2015). Furthermore, after Lowassa became the UKAWA candidate Gwajima found himself in a public dispute with the former secretary general, 2010 presidential candidate, and former Catholic priest Dr Slaa, who had left CHADEMA after being sidelined. Bishop Gwajima caused public disapproval by allegedly revealing intimate details about Slaa's family life in a church sermon and claiming that Slaa had left the party because of pressure from his wife and not because of Lowassa. Gwajima went so far as to claim that Slaa's wife was possessed (Rudisha TV 2015b). As soon as the 2015 elections were over Gwajima opportunistically made a U-turn and was reported as saying that he had never supported Lowassa and his party; he himself became a CCM contender five years later in 2020 (Dar24 2015).

Pentecostal-Charismatic Populism and the Fate of the Nation in 2020

When John Pombe Magufuli was elected the new president of Tanzania in 2015, he had a few major agendas in mind, including his anticorruption war and the nation's resource and economic policies (Jacob and Hundsbæk Pedersen 2018). He believed that Tanzania had been cheated out of profit and wealth by 'exploitative imperialists' (*mabeberu*) ever since independence. However, his first term also included assaults on Tanzania's political opposition, civil society, and media, as well as on democracy and human rights. He attempted to silence the Tanzanian

media on contested issues, and he shut down several newspapers, radio and television stations, as well as social media platforms.

Magufuli was Roman Catholic with Pentecostal and Charismatic ties. When he was sworn into office in 2015, Prophet T. B. Joshua, a renowned Pentecostal leader of the megachurch The Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos, Nigeria, was called to mediate the transition after the runner-up Edward Lowassa disputed the election results, causing public tension in the country. It was also reported that Magufuli continued to have a personal relationship with the Nigerian pastor after first visiting the Lagos megachurch as early as 2011 (Zambian Eye 2016; BBC 2021c). During the Covid-19 pandemic Magufuli told a congregation in Dodoma that the 'corona[virus] is satanic and can't survive in the body of Jesus, it will be destroyed' (Meek 2021, 3). In April 2020 he called for citizens to engage in three days of national prayer to defeat Covid. Magufuli described the virus as a demon (*shetani*) and declared all places of worship to be open because that was where God and true healing were to be found. It was later argued that the elections played a significant role in his response to the pandemic since he attempted to win popular support by boosting his authoritarian and anti-imperialist standing with a demonstration of his ability in 'religious mediation' (Meek 2021; Haynes 2018). By suggesting that the pandemic was Satan's doing, Magufuli's rhetoric drew from Pentecostal notions of spiritual warfare (Kirby et al. 2020).

Media sources make it obvious that Bishop Gwajima enjoyed the full support of President Magufuli, the CCM party chairman, when he collected the forms to run for parliament on the CCM ticket in Kawe constituency in Dar es Salaam on 1 July 2020. By this time Gwajima had come a long way in constructing himself as a political Big Man and creating a potential, broad-based Christian electorate. It is difficult to establish what exactly led to his leaving the

opposition and turning to CCM or whether it was simply political opportunism. However, even if he did not know the president in 2015, by 2020 he had become close to him. Gwajima rhetorically likened himself to some of the major religiopolitical leaders of the world: 'People should be aware that Ayatollah Khomeini was the Iranian supreme leader as well as a cleric. Pope Benedict XVI was an administrative leader of the Vatican state as well as the Roman Catholic pontiff. There have been other clerics who served as lawmakers such as pastor Gertrude Rwakatare, Peter Msigwa and many others' (*The Citizen* 2020a). Ultimately, in the CCM primaries Gwajima was in third place; nonetheless, President Magufuli made him the CCM candidate in his constituency, observing: 'The winner in the primary elections was my nephew but as a chairman I dropped his name. He could never compete with Gwajima, who always speaks the truth' (*The Citizen* 2020b).

The CCM had long had an eye on winning the constituency, and it was apparent that, of the CCM candidates, Gwajima had the best chance of defeating the sitting CHADEMA MP, Halima Mdee, a Muslim. During the campaign supporting Gwajima, Magufuli openly and populistically declared his disappointment with Mdee and her inability to bring about development (*maendeleo*) in the Kawe constituency, where the construction of roads had been difficult and there was no hospital:

> You have not wronged God, but you made a mistake at [the] last elections. Make a change this year, give me Gwajima to bring about change. I know there are dirty campaigns going on concerning religion (*udini*).[29]… Parliamentary work requires a brave, fearless, God-fearing man. The Central Committee has decided that Gwajima is the right person to be the Member of Parliament for Kawe. (Mwishehe 2020)

It is apparent that President Magufuli was using the fame of the popular man of the cloth to secure his own electorate while providing strong public support for Gwajima. The campaign was successful, and Gwajima achieved a landslide victory over Mdee with more than 194,000 votes, representing over 84 percent of the total number cast (*The Citizen* 2020c).

After entering parliament Gwajima was appointed a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Justice, Ethics and Powers. After Magufuli's death less than four months later, he adopted the president's legacy as a major critic of Covid vaccination. In August 2021, however, he was suspended from the committee based on various allegations, including lying and degrading the parliament's dignity with his polemic on the Covid vaccination. His suspension was promoted by President Samia Suluhu Hassan and by the Minister of Health, Dorothy Gwajima, his sister-in-law. As already noted, Bishop Gwajima had warned Tanzanians against taking the vaccine, alleging that it carried microchips with an identification number so that Western nations could monitor Africans with their computers in a conspiracy to create a new world order. This populist move took his politically motivated theology to the national level. He claimed spiritual warfare against Western imperialism and the new economic world order was to redeem Tanzania as a nation.

Conclusions

The Pentecostal movement has become an alternative channel that is replacing ethnically based patron-client relationships in urban Africa and redistributing political power. Riding on the back of this trend, Bishop Josephat Gwajima invented himself as a Pentecostal-Charismatic Big Man over a period of many years. His political career is based on the long-term building of an

electorate as well as religious mediation. His actions instantiate the payoff structure of Pentecostalism with features from clientelism and patrimonialism, although returns take the intangible forms of religious mediation and deliverance for individual as well as collective redemption. It remains to be seen whether the newly established access to state resources will materialize in more-traditional forms of patronage through goods and development projects in his constituency.

Gwajima's theology has three dimensions and political repercussions. His approach and religious mediation are effective because they cover an extensive scale of spatial and agency perspectives (Fassin 2021), ranging from intimate experiences of local witches to the national and global conspiracies of secret societies and Western imperialism. The spiritual dimension is grounded foremost in notions of spiritual warfare and deliverance from evil forces, the two most obvious destructive forces being Islam and witches that exploit the labour force. The leadership dimension is detectable in his voiced concerns about the righteousness of Tanzanian political leaders, and the nationalist dimension is evident in the extension of spiritual warfare outward from the individual to the entire nation and global scene. This is compounded by concern for the fate of Tanzania under the pressure of the wicked plots of the imperialist West and the 'new world order'. Taken together, Bishop Gwajima's teachings, speeches, and actions count as political populism in Tanzania.

These observations partly align with findings from Zambia, where Pentecostal politics expand the field of political power beyond the state to include both demonic and divine entities (Haynes 2018). While there are reported failures in the declared and effective sociopolitical potency of Pentecostal leaders in Africa (Haynes 2018; Blanes and Zawiejska 2020), too little time has passed since the 2020 elections to assess Gwajima's long-term political influence in

Tanzania's sociopolitical environment. Yet it must be noted that he has been able to encompass both the spiritual and the secular domains of witches, Islam, and Covid vaccines with the notion of spiritual warfare, and has systematically built his religio-political profile on a broad base of popular discourses of suspicion, witchcraft, and conspiracies. It has been argued that the prevalent idea among Pentecostals is no longer that spiritual warfare against witchcraft is about 'a break with the past' (Meyer 1999), but rather that spiritual warfare against new technologies is about 'a break with the future'. Modern technologies such as the alleged microchips in Covid vaccines are feared for their exploitative connectivity, and they are targeted as objects of an electronic modernity that helps mediate the power of the devil (Rio et al. 2017). Gwajima addresses and spiritually mediates people's failed efforts to participate in the world of development and material abundance while acknowledging the national and global inequalities, power asymmetries, and associated moral problems that unequal material and power accumulation produce. While he takes part in the Pentecostal and pan-African mission to move Africa out of the 'global shadows' (Ferguson 2006), the threat of the 'new world order', in which some nations will perish and a new economic system of exploitation will emerge, still exists.

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[1] In Tanzania this church is grouped together with the other Pentecostal churches. I use the term ‘Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity’ to refer to a broad variety of churches that share Christian beliefs and practices that emphasize the working of the Holy Spirit, and that typically value prophecy, visions, prayer, healing, and deliverance from evil spirits (Rio et al. 2017: 7). I also follow the terminology of three waves of Pentecostalism, with the third wave comprising independent Pentecostal-Charismatic churches from about the mid-1980s until the present day. However, Glory of Christ Tanzania Church has a strong element of prophecy and healing, and the emphasis in the discussion should be on the concept of Charismatic.

[2] A series of sermons uploaded to YouTube under the heading *Ukweli kuhusu Freemasonry*, 'The truth about Freemasonry'.

[3] The data consists of participant observation conducted at the services and weekday consultations of the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church. This material includes teachings and sermons provided by the pastor, prayers to return zombies, and interviews with and testimonies by churchgoers who have been zombies. Audiovisual materials such as DVDs of services produced by the church were made available. Media sources include the Christian newspapers *Nyakati* and *Msema Kweli*; established mainline Swahili and English newspapers *Mwananchi*, *Nipashe*, *The Citizen*, *Daily News*, and *The Guardian*; as well as the news database AllAfrica.com. Popular and Christian websites and blogs include Jambo Networks, Global Publishers, Jamii Forums, Strictly Gospel, and Sayuni.blogspot.com.

[4] For other examples of Pentecostal leaders in electoral politics see, e.g., McCauley 2015, 337-339.

[5] For a more detailed discussion of theologies of spiritual warfare and their dissemination since the 1970s see Ruth Marshall 2016, 98–100.

[6] The special-seat system was adopted in Tanzania to increase the number of women in the parliament. Political parties select and rank their candidates for special seats.

[7] It is unclear when exactly this change of title took place.

[8] *Msukule* is the term used in Sumbawanga, Rukwa Region, and Handeni, Tanga Region. *Ndondocha* is used in coastal areas and *ng'witunga* among the Sukuma, south of Lake Victoria (Mesaki 1993, 161). Linguistically speaking, the term *msukule* appears to refer both to the person or the victim and the place itself, i.e., the place among the witches where the victims are taken.

[9] Westerlund suggests that Sufism has the capacity to transform non-Islamic spiritual forces into an Islamic conceptual world of *jini* (spirits), *shaitan*, or *iblis* (Westerlund 2009: 2). In the Swahili language they are named s*hetani* and *ibilisi*.

[10] The New International version of the Bible is used in all of the citations in the text, www.biblica.com.

[11] It has been noted in African contexts that Pentecostalism directly addresses material inequality by moralizing against excessive consumption and accumulation (Meyer 1998; Smith 2001; Parish 2003; Newell 2007; Haynes 2012).

[12] In deliverance and prayers the term to 'return', *rudisha* (Sw.), is used.

[13] Muslim religious leader.

[14] For instance, 'Vunja Nguvu Ya Uisilamu Na Majini', 1 Dec. 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmUBOtGoFx4&t=973s . Accessed 11 Feb. 2022.

[15] Several videos with the heading 'Waislamu wanamjibu Pastor Paul Husein' that the Muslim community posted in response to Paul Hussein's allegations can be found on YouTube. See, for instance, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXmdzU190xU, part 4, 31 Mar. 2010. Accessed 11 Feb. 2022.

[16] Field notes, 15 July 2008.

[17] Prior to the 2010s Pentecostal leaders expressed a clear aversion to politics and some resentment for not being taken seriously, and worked against the major Christian denominations acquiring access to the state (Hans Olsson, personal communication).

[18] *Mhadhara* sg., *mihadhara* pl.: lecture or public talk.

[19] For a more detailed description see Ludwig 1999, and Tambila and Rubanza 2006.

[20] The findings in Njozi's 2000 book were provocative and critical of the government, which subsequently banned its publication in Tanzania (Kaiser 2001: 95).

[21] Zanzibar entered the OIC in late 1992, but after stormy parliamentary and public debates the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government decided to withdraw its membership in August 1993 (Ludwig 1996, 219-220).

[22] Pentecostal churches are not members of CCT but many of them share another umbrella organization, Pentecostal Council of Tanzania, PCT.

[23] Strictly Gospel and Sayuni blog (2010) were citing the *Nipashe* newspaper.

[24] Deuteronomy 18: 9-13: 'When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord; because of these same detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God'. 2 Kings 21 :6: 'He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced divination, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger'.

[25] CHADEMA (Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo, Party for Democracy and Development) has been the long-term opposition party in Tanzania.

[26] For a detailed discussion on *kahdi* courts see Minnucci (2015).

[27] Umoja wa Katiba ya Wananchi, Coalition for the People's Constitution.

[28] Tanzania Christian Forum is composed of the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) of the Protestant denominations and church related organizations, Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), and the Council of Pentecostal Churches in Tanzania (CPCT).

[29] The concept '*udini*' is used to refer to religio-centrism or religious bias (Olsson 2019, 197).