

not an ending) to the long-standing engagement of the University of Oxford's Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology with the peoples of North East Africa.

The present work focuses on the effects of the 'Second Sudanese civil war' (1983–2005) on the Uduk, whose homeland was destroyed in 1987. Since then, the bulk of the Uduk people have crossed the Sudan/Ethiopia border at least five times, while others have been displaced to Khartoum and South Sudan, and some have even made their way to the United States. Although firmly grounded in the oral histories of individuals, the book does not just concentrate on the lives of a small and insignificant group of people in an obscure corner of North East Africa, but looks at the wider role of international forces and agencies as well as their local results. Paradoxically (but characteristically for James), after pages of harrowing detail of tragedy and suffering, it ends with chapters on dance, music, poetry and religious innovation that testify to the strength and creativity of the human spirit in the face of events that most of us, fortunately, can barely imagine.

As a fine contemporary multi-sited, multifaceted ethnography, *War and Survival* will be read by all anthropologists interested in North East Africa, but ought to reach a much wider audience of historians, political scientists, sociologists and representatives of many other disciplines, as well as aid and development workers. In fact, it would be worth reading for all those working on conflict, borderlands, refugees, religion and the arts (among many other topics) in Africa and elsewhere. It reflects James' innovative and sophisticated approach to analysing the relationship between contemporary history and the *longue durée*. It also represents an informed yet subtle indictment of the role of the so-called 'international community' in responding to war and persecution. As Alex de Waal writes on the back cover, it should be studied by 'anyone wishing to understand the experience of war or genocide'.

All this may sound depressing, but there are so many aspects of the book that are lighter, and even humorous; I particularly liked the Uduk satirical songs she translates. To declare an interest, James was my doctoral supervisor and I am a long-standing admirer of her work. But that is not why I am unusually enthusiastic in my praise of this remarkable book. I believe it is a very important work and that it should be widely read. I also believe that those who do so will tend to agree with me.

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**Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda** by T. LONGMAN

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Pope John Paul II reacted to criticism of the Christian church and its alleged involvement in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda by stating that only individuals (thus Christians as well) were implicated in the genocide, but that the church as an institution was not to blame. In *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* Timothy Longman challenges this claim. He suggests that the churches and even Christianity bear an important responsibility for the Rwandan genocide. At least, Christian faith as it existed in Rwanda. The latter issue, a contextualisation of

Christianity in Rwandan socio-political history, is paramount if one wants to grasp the nature of the involvement of Christianity in one of the most horrific events of the twentieth century.

Longman argues that the distinct nature of Christianity in Rwanda as it developed over time made genocide morally possible: 'The Christian message received in Rwanda was not one of "love and fellowship", but one of obedience, division, and power' (p. 10). Moreover, his analysis of the process through which a significant part of the church leadership became actively involved in the genocidal violence parallels the dominant interpretations of the dynamics of the Rwandan genocide: the ethnic card was played to counter a threat to the status quo. Generally this argument is used to explain the reaction of the incumbent political elite to the challenge to its reign, but in the context of Christianity it refers to a threat to the dominant Christian message in Rwanda and the established order in the Church hierarchy.

Longman meticulously traces the origins of the Christian church in Rwanda from the first missionaries until the apocalyptic last days of the Second Republic in 1994. The first part of the book comprises five chapters through which the evolution of Christian churches in Rwanda is described and analysed in chronological order. The first two chapters in this section deal with Christianity and the colonial state. The missionary activity of the White Fathers was marked by the desire to foster a partnership with the state; church leaders did not side with the poor. Over time, the Christian churches actively helped to shape the nature of ethnic identities through their alliance with vested powers and the participation in (ethnic) politics. The church imbued ethnicity with racial connotations and the socio-political landscape was read through the prism of ethnic identities. The missionary work undertaken by the White Fathers laid the groundwork for the nature of Christianity in Rwanda. Significantly, Longman's analysis also implies that the most important chunk of Rwandan civil society was co-opted by the state from the start.

Chapters four to six deal with the developments of Christianity in the post-colonial era and especially with the period of democratisation starting in 1990. There were no major changes in the nature of Christianity in Rwanda after independence. In the end, it was the overall environment created by the churches since their arrival in Rwanda that made it possible that 'practicing Christians could kill their neighbours without feeling that they were acting inconsistently with their faith' (p. 191). Such a claim is almost shocking although Longman presents his argument convincingly. And it counters the claim made by several authors that massive participation of Christians in the genocide was a consequence of the fact that Christianity had not taken deep root in Rwandan society. But the puzzle of the Rwandan genocide is not only why the majority of ordinary (Christian) Rwandans *could* become involved in the genocide, but also why and how they actually *were* involved in the killing of their neighbours. To make sense of the actual behaviour by the mass of practicing Christians living on the hills of Rwanda one also needs an insight in the so-called '*passage à l'acte*'. To do so, Longman develops a second argument. He suggests that an undercurrent of dissent with the policy of (political) engagement with the powerful that the churches had pursued since their arrival could only come to maturity during the period of democratisation in the years preceding the genocide. The growing influence of

diverging practices and visions within the church would eventually – and paradoxically – define the nature of the involvement of the established church structures and personnel in the genocidal violence: ‘the genocide helped to eradicate those other possibilities and to reassert churches as authoritarian institutions allied to an authoritarian state’ (p. 197).

An exploration of micro-level dynamics and motives is paramount to underscore the claim that the genocide was also used to bolster the positions of those with authority within the churches. In the second part of the book the focus changes therefore to micro-level developments in two Presbyterian parishes situated in rural Rwanda: Kirinda and Biguhu. Longman describes the different nature of the relations between the church, local elite and inhabitants in the parishes in the period preceding the genocide. The local elite of Kirinda was centred around the church in a ‘patron-client system parallel to and linked with the state patrimonial system’ (p. 200). During the genocide and in an attempt to reassert their recently challenged authority, they found enough support among the peasants to organise the massacre of the Tutsi. The genocidal violence in Biguhu, a nearby parish, had to be initiated from the outside. Longman connects this diverging conflict pathway with the fact that the church in Biguhu had fostered a cooperative connection with and within the general population devoid of any misuse of power and ethnic polarisation.

One of the absolute strengths of the book is the wealth of first-hand information presented. Longman is one of the few scholars in the exploding field of Rwanda studies able to pair research conducted in the post-genocide era with first-hand insight from before the genocide. He conducted his initial research on Christian churches in Rwanda in 1992–3. In the aftermath of the genocide, he was a researcher with Human Rights Watch and contributed to the most comprehensive study on the genocide to date: *Leave None to Tell the Story*. During this period he was able to follow up on the information he had collected before the genocide. First-hand observations, in-depth interviews and even rare material from communal archives make the evidence compelling.

Nevertheless, some issues deserve more attention. For example, Longman only briefly mentions the fact that members of the *Abarokore* religious movement resisted the genocide since they ‘were generally not integrated in the established structures of power’, and ‘arose as challenge to the structures of power’ of the Pentecostal church (p. 196). Together with the fact that Muslims are said to have participated much less in the genocide, this observation poses an important counterexample that could have been put to greater use to underscore the main thesis about the nature of the dominant Christian faith in Rwanda. Equally, the fact that in the end there was also genocide in Biguhu and that the genocide was not initiated by the church in either parish raises some questions with respect to the overall conclusion that churches are necessarily political institutions (p. 313); ultimately, it was the state and state personnel that initiated and drove the genocide through these parishes and the entire Rwandan society. Although it is clear that churches should indeed be considered as centres of power, Longman’s analysis lacks an adequate explanation of the differences observed between church and state (actors) during the genocide.

These minor remaining questions do not render the book weaker. They could be considered as further avenues for research. The layered analysis means that

the work can be read with different objectives in mind and by a wide and diverse audience. The main story of the nature of Christianity is embedded in the political and social developments in Rwanda, at both the national and the local level. Such a combination of perspectives is hard to find in the works on both Rwanda and the phenomenon of genocide as such. *Christianity and Genocide* is a necessary piece of the puzzle for those interested in a range of topics: Rwandan history (and the genocide), genocide, Christianity and religion, civil society and wider socio-political developments in Central Africa.

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**Africa's Islamic Experience: history, culture, and politics** edited by A. A. MAZRUI, P. M. DIKIRR, R. OSTERGARD JR., M. TOLER and P. MACHARIA  
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American perceptions of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa were dramatically altered as a result of 9/11, just as the attacks altered African perceptions of the Western world. Despite the fact that these issues have been widely discussed and debated, this book examines Africa's impact on Muslim history. The volume edited by Ali Mazrui among others focuses on how Africa has influenced directions of Muslim history instead of how Islam has impacted upon Africa.

If Islam was born out of Judaism and Christianity, was it therefore not born out of the Nile Valley? What particular role did Africa play in promoting and protecting the Islamic faith? These questions among others are addressed as part of this collection, offering perspectives that bring us closer to answering questions such as those put forward above. Published in 2009, the volume examines new patterns of intersecting relationships between Africa and the Arab World, interactions between Islam and Christianity, and so forth. The contributors come from a variety of backgrounds, from political scientists to anthropologists to researchers of Muslim societies, Islam and culture.

Thus, we learn (from Amadu Jacky Kaba) about the demographic distribution of Muslims and Christians and those practicing traditional religion in Africa. Goolam Vahed discusses the identities of Indian Muslims who have been a significant presence since they first arrived in South Africa, and for whom religion has been the dominant identity, often superseding ancestry, descent and language. Vahed is supportive of the need to understand these issues in the social and political context of African majority rule in South Africa, complete with the effects of globalisation and the increasing fearfulness of the Muslim community. The contribution of Ginobe Edwin regarding globalisation and its impact on Islam in Kenya is particularly important. The *Ummah* in Kenya has placed itself in a strategic position both inside government and outside government, so that it cannot be ignored in any meaningful balance of power in the future; this is a particularly important development at a time when Kenya's politics are turbulent.

These three cases are picked somewhat at random from an offering of thirteen, each one of which gives an insight into Muslim perceptions of identity and Muslim initiatives in the politicised field of religion in sub-Saharan Africa.