

Charlotte A. Quinn and Frederick Quinn. *Pride, Faith, and Fear: Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. vi + 175 pp. Bibliography. Index. \$29.95. Cloth.

Pride Faith and Fear is a study of the dynamic role of Islam in the political and cultural life of sub-Saharan Africa. Charlotte A. Quinn, a senior policy analyst for the U.S. government and author of *Mandingo Kingdoms of Senegambia* (1972), began the book some twenty years ago; Frederick Quinn, an Episcopal priest interested in interfaith relations, edited, expanded, and completed it after her death. The authors focus on five countries – Nigeria, Sudan, Senegal, Kenya, and South Africa -- to illustrate the range of African Islamic experiences. They give historical overviews to explain the development of Islam in each country before analyzing contemporary issues of Islamic law, leadership, and custom.

An estimated 160 million Muslims – the vast majority of them Sunnis -- live in sub-Saharan Africa today, accounting for perhaps a third of the region's population. They are ethnically, culturally, and ideologically diverse. This diversity notwithstanding, the authors are able to identify several general features of African Islam. First, African Islam has strong local roots. Mosques cater to particular communities and have independent leaders who need not yield to any higher transnational Muslim authorities – a situation that reflects a kind of political diffusion that is typical of Sunni Islam at large. At the same time, African Islam is globally connected, so that many Muslims are aware of Islamic developments occurring as far afield as Indonesia. The authors point out that the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79 was particularly inspirational for African Muslims, who welcomed it, in part, for breaking the hegemony of the Arab world on Islamic leadership. More recent developments affecting the political worldviews of African Muslims include the Israeli-Palestinian crisis and U.S. government policies towards Muslim countries, particularly in the post-September 11, 2001 context. While Christian-Muslim strife is increasingly visible in some countries, reflecting communal contestations for political power, African Muslims are also beset by divisions and are competing for power and influence internally, within and between ethnic, Sufi, and Islamist groups. Finally, the authors note that Muslim militant extremism (as reflected in the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi) is the preserve of a tiny, alienated minority and point out that the vast majority of African Muslims, like their Christian counterparts, are holding to their faiths while trying simply to get by, individually or as families, often in the face of economic challenges.

The chapter on Nigeria is in some ways the richest of the book, though it is also the least organized. The authors explain the country's Shari'a controversies, their bearing on the 1979 and 1999 constitutions, and their renewed visibility after 2000, when the state of Zamfara began a trend in the predominantly Muslim north by declaring the imposition of an Islamic penal code – a measure that it publicized and inaugurated by amputating the hand of local cattle thief. The authors argue that this manifestation of Islamism, reflected in popular calls for the strict application of Islamic laws – is a response to disillusionment. It has arisen in the face of poor economic conditions (deriving from inflation, unemployment, and increasingly wide discrepancies between rich and poor in the midst of the country's oil boom) and over perceptions of lawlessness and endemic corruption. While Nigerians Muslims are certain to exacerbate tensions with

their Christian compatriots by continuing to insist on the primacy of Shari'a law within the Nigerian federation, many Muslims apparently hope that an Islamic order will bring greater stability along with a more equitable sharing of national wealth.

The chapter on Sudan considers the role of religious politics against the context of the country's chronic civil war, which has largely operated along a North-South, Muslim-Christian divide. The authors make two bold assertions. First, they argue that an "Islamic political system is clearly here to stay in Sudan, and solutions that ignore this fact" – including southern calls for a secular multicultural state – "will remain empty exercises" (p. 66). Second, bearing in mind Sudan's tremendous ethnic and linguistic diversity, they suggest that "long-feuding groups" – Muslim communities among them – "can severely damage one another but never provide the knockout punch" (p. 67), thereby complicating efforts to end the war through a stable political settlement. The chapter does not consider the likely impact of oil politics on the Sudanese civil war, though oil revenues only began visibly to strengthen the war-waging powers of Khartoum's Islamist regime in 2000, after the bulk of this book was written.

Relative to Nigeria and Sudan, Senegal looks like an oasis of religious stability. In Senegal, Sufi Islam is paramount and Islamism has had a negligible impact. During the postcolonial period, Sufi leaders have tended to cooperate with national political leaders, while Muslim-Christian relations have been generally harmonious. (Of course, Christians only constitute a small minority of about 2% and are concentrated in coastal towns). Yet tensions may be looming, as unemployment threatens to rise and as the two pre-eminent Sufi brotherhoods of the country – the Mouridiyya and Tijaniyya -- compete for members while facing a generational shift in leadership.

In Kenya, Muslims account for some 20% of the population and are heterogeneous. Kenya has "Arab" coastal Muslims and "African" Muslims of the interior; it also has Muslims of South Asian origin who are active as urban entrepreneurs and who include Shi'is of various sects (notably Ismaili Bohras and Agha Khanids, and Twelvers). Concentrated in the far north is also a disgruntled Somali Muslim population, whose members voted in a never-implemented 1959 referendum to merge with neighboring Somalia for reasons of cultural affinity. These internal divisions notwithstanding, many Kenyan Muslims are frustrated by what they perceive as a Christian stranglehold on political and educational power – the legacy of benefits accrued during the colonial period from contact with Christian missions and schools. Yet this frustration is unlikely to erupt into a Shari'a controversy, the authors suggest, because Kenyan Muslims, unlike their Sudanese counterparts, "are a distinct minority and can live with compromise" (p. 125).

In South Africa, Islam has a long and fascinating history though less than 2% of the population is Muslim. The Dutch first brought Southeast Asian Muslims to the country in the seventeenth century; others arrived from South Asia and Yemen in the centuries ahead, while a number of Africans (especially transplanted freed slaves) converted upon arrival. South African Islam survived and flourished despite experiences of slavery and indentured servitude, of religious repression, and of dispersal. In the past half-century, several South African Muslims distinguished themselves as anti-apartheid activists (here the case of Imam Abdullah Haron [d. 1969] stands out), while more recently others (such as Farid Esack and Ebrahim Moosa) have emerged as leading thinkers of progressive Islam.

More than a generation has passed since J. Spencer Trimingham wrote his survey studies of African Islam, so that a book like this one is sorely needed. Short, easy to read, and insightful, *Pride, Faith, and Fear* will appeal to a wide academic and popular audience including historians and political scientists, government analysts and journalists, Muslim and Christian leaders, and others.

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