

# ‘Pentecost of the city’

## Towards an *African urban migratory theology*

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### Abstract

Migration is a growing phenomenon affecting African cities. This article engages the current reality of migrants in the City of Cotonou, Benin, theologically. It re-imagines theological education for Cotonou to flourish by 2050, producing an *African urban migratory theology* that deeply engages the presence of migrants as contributors to socio-economic development. The central question is: How can theological education prepare Christians in the process of ‘Pentecost of the city’ and build flourishing African cities? In this work, I will engage with the ideas of urban theologians such as Ray Bakke.

First, I will present the realities in Cotonou through the results of surveys. Secondly, I will focus on the historical issues of migration. Thirdly, I will explain the concept of ‘Pentecost of the city’ by elaborating arguments for an *African Urban migratory theology*. By doing that, I will highlight the necessity of change in curriculum.

**Key words:** Pentecost, City, Africa, Urban, Migration, Theology, Curriculum

## 1. Introduction

According to the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division in the document named ‘World Population Prospects 2019 Highlights’ (2019:12), by 2050, the Sub-Saharan Africa population is estimated at 2,118 billion. This population growth is probably linked to the migratory phenomenon that mainly affects African countries’ big cities and the evolution of the fertility rate.

Alluding to the city of Cotonou, most children are selling their family homes and going to the outskirts of Cotonou in cities such as Calavi, Pahou, Hevié, Tori, and others. According to the final results of the fourth General Population and Housing Census of Benin (RGPH4, 2013:3), the demographic weight went from “9.8% of the total population in 2002 to 6.8% in 2013 for the benefit of the neighboring

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municipalities of Abomey-Calavi, Ouidah and Seme-Kpodji which have become real dormitory cities.”

International migration is indeed an important political, economic, and social challenge. Well managed, it can be beneficial to the development of Benin. It is facilitated by freedom of movement within the two main sub-regional organizations, which are WAEMU<sup>2</sup> and ECOWAS.<sup>3</sup> Almost 98% of immigrants in the 5 years preceding the 2002 General Population and Housing Census come from the South, especially from neighboring countries. The tendency of Benin to become a true country of immigration is clearly apparent from the data available. The reasons for migrants' displacement are multiple and highly interconnected, but mainly economic. Almost all of them work in the informal sector. If in the past migrations were mainly carried out by men, today they affect more and more women. So we can speak of a trend towards the feminization of migration (Hamidou et Kouton, 2006:4).

In fact, ladies are more involved in business, which is one of the great reasons for migrations. Through awareness-raising about gender issues, African women's traditional and cultural ideas and behaviours are becoming a thing of the past. More respect is given to ladies who are becoming more autonomous and can contribute to development.

A re-reading and a re-imagination of the city within thirty (30) years allow us to realise that the new purchasers of plots build buildings with a western standing, having objective international organisations with foreigners renting these buildings. Therefore, the house's style is no longer within reach of the average Beninese. Consequently, there would be more foreigners living in the city of Cotonou in 2050 than Beninese. Cotonou is said to be a cross-cultural, multi-ethnic city where the gap between rich and poor is widening.

Migration is a growing phenomenon affecting African cities. This article engages the current reality of migrants in the City of Cotonou, Benin, theologically. It re-imagines theological education for Cotonou to flourish by 2050, producing an *African urban migratory theology* that deeply engages the presence of migrants as contributors to socio-economic development. The central question is: How can theological education prepare Christians in the process of 'Pentecost of the city' and build flourishing African cities? In this work, I will engage with the ideas of urban theologians as Ray Bakke.

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<sup>2</sup> West African Economic Monetary Union

<sup>3</sup> Economic Community of West African States



Cotonou: Red Star Crossroads

Some research has been done on religion in African cities. Most theological curricula in Africa take into consideration urban realities. The Church is not always aware of a city's realities and strategies by key decision-makers. The Church needs to project its own reflections on the future of the city. This trans-disciplinary research project attempted to escalate the priority for robust, creative theological engagement with African urban challenges.

This study focused on collecting data and studying the current realities of flourishing African cities in order to rethink the theological education of African cities by 2050 while producing a theology that will consider the presence of migrants in the city of Cotonou.

First, I will present the realities in Cotonou through the results of surveys. Secondly, I will focus on the historical issues of migration. Thirdly, I will explain the concept of "Pentecost of the city" by elaborating arguments for *African Urban migratory theology*. By doing that, I will highlight the necessity of change in curriculum.

## 2. The city of Cotonou

### 2.1 Overview

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis (INSAE), the population of Cotonou in 2019 is 1, 1152, 697 and in 2050, the statistics will be 2, 288, 126. The big cosmopolitan city of Benin, the economic capital, has an area of 80km<sup>2</sup> and is a crossroads city in West Africa, both socio-tourist and commercial. As a result of the advancing sea and the lakeside town "wedged between the sea to the south, the lagoon to the north and swamps offer a fragile and disrupted ecologi-

cal environment with enormous difficulties of self-regulation” (Edou, 2008:23). When it rains, the roads are flooded, and Beninese founded their way towards Calavi, Glo and its surroundings. It is a dynamic city, open to welcoming all migrants in its centre. Benin citizens are moving into the suburbs.

Cotonou, a cosmopolitan city, “hosts almost all the ministerial departments and administrative services, as well as the main institutions of the Republic ... It hosts the only port and the only international airport of the country ...” (Edou, 2008:18). The countries of the interland are served by Cotonou, a place of the largest market in West Africa with the curious name of *Dantokpa*, meaning ‘next to the snake river,’ which should be interested in the understanding of the spiritual cartography of the city of Cotonou whose explanation also means ‘river of death.’ The Law 98-005 of 15 January 1999 constitutes Cotonou as a special status city with 13 districts. For professional and economic reasons, it is filled during the day by people from Porto-Novo, Ouidah and Calavi.

In terms of land, there are no real laws to regulate the purchase and sale of plots in cities. People need to have a minimum of 30 million francs CFA to buy land in Cotonou. This accentuates land speculation. The city of Cotonou:

is experiencing a slowdown in its growth rate, which is reflected, among other things, in the negative growth rates recorded in the 5th, 7th and 11th districts. This is due to several causes, including the massive displacement of the populations of these districts towards other localities, and the pressures exerted by the foreigners on the parcels by buying them at exorbitant prices to the owners (Makpenon, 2008:19).

Regarding the immigration policy in Benin, a visa is free for 90 days for all Africans. It is becoming a country with intermediate income; this is what emerged from the World Bank ranking on 1 July 2020. Benin is now in the ‘intermediate income / lower bracket’ category. That will increase the destination of Cotonou for business and education. Not only Chinese or Indians are interested in immigrating, but all other nation’s citizens in Africa are also immigrating and will immigrate. Cotonou “attracts people from other regions in search of employment, because of family reunion or to continue their studies. There are also many foreigners, including the Ibo and Yoruba of Nigeria, not to mention the Nigerians, Indo-Pakistanis, Lebanese and other foreigners established for commercial activities” (Edou, 2008:17) as the Chinese and South Koreans. China has become the engine of the world and has chosen Africa in its expansion. Migrants are likely to hold the economy, which would remain informal. Many religions of the world, such as Asian religions, will be found in Cotonou. Like Dambisa Moyo (2009:152) said:

...the Chinese are coming. And it is in Africa that their campaign for global dominance will be solidified. Economics come first, and when they own the banks, the land and the resources across Africa, their crusade will be over. They will have their own... The China movement in Africa is on the march - the West ignores it at its own peril.

The Chinese settled in Cotonou mainly for business. Their currency lends itself to it; 100 Chinese Yuan is approximately 9000 CFA. If they invest little, the return on investment is essential. Their culture is similar to Benin's on the culinary level, which facilitates their adaptation. As for cooking, they eat very spicy food like Beninese. On a religious level, they worship their biological fathers, who are the immediate provider when needed according to their belief system. By their presence, it is Hinduism and Buddhism that are introduced in Cotonou and other Eastern religions that the theological training programme must take seriously. The coronavirus (COVID-19) shined a light on the presence of the Chinese in Cotonou and Wuhan in China, where the pandemic started.

Let us focus on the results of the survey.

## **2.2 The results of the survey and the new urbanisation of Cotonou**

### **2.2.1 Methodology of the 2018 survey<sup>4</sup>**

Our target population consists mainly of resident households in our study area. It is essentially made up of everything else equal to indigenous people, foreign households, households in Benin, and households headed by Christian communities (Doctors, Pastors, Missionaries, Evangelists, Elders, Deacons, etc.) because of the subject of our study. In addition, specific questions were addressed to foreign households and religious leaders found in households in their churches.

Our study area is Cotonou. Depending on the nature of our target population, we oriented our research in the residential areas of Cotonou. A total of four residential areas were included in this study. These are Haie Vive (12th district), Houeyihou (11th district), JAK (4th district), and Degakon.

In the 1st district in Akpakpa, we consider these areas as part of the homogeneous sub-groups (Strata) of our target population.

For data collection, within these sub-groups, that is, in our study areas, households were randomly selected. A simple random sampling method was used. In this collection method, every member of the population has an equal chance of being investi-

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<sup>4</sup> Data source: The data used is from the field survey conducted in Cotonou from the survey questionnaire from 4 - 22 September 2018. Software Used and Data Analysis: An input mask was created for data entry with the access software. The data has been exported into the Excel software for the realisation of tables and graphs.

Religion	Statistics	Frequency %
Atheism	1	0,35
Animism	1	0,35
Buddhism	6	2,11
Catholic	165	58,10
Ekankar	2	0,70
Evangelical	43	15,14
Islam	39	13,73
Protestant	26	9,15
Shiva	1	0,35
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents according to the religion practiced

Sources: Our field surveys

gated. In this case, 297 households were surveyed, including 39 foreign households and 31 households of leaders and leaders of religious communities. After clearing the database, we have a global sample of 286 individuals, including 34 households of foreigners and 31 households of leaders and leaders of religious communities.

Table 1 presents the different religions practiced by our respondents and the associated statistics. It appears that the dominant religion is that of the Roman Catholic church, with 50.10%. It is followed directly by the evangelicals, who represent 15.14% of our sample. Finally, Islam and Protestantism represent 13.73% and 9.15%, respectively. It is worth noting the appearance of a new Asian religion (Shiva). If its percentage is 1 in 286, the growing presence of Asians should not be overlooked. Therefore, the influence of Asian religions is a considerable parameter in the future of the city.

### 2.3 Methodology of the 2019 survey<sup>5</sup>

Target population and sizes: Our target population is foreigners living in the city of Cotonou. The objective pursued by the study justifies the choice of this target. The

<sup>5</sup> Data source: The data used is from the field survey carried out in Cotonou from the survey questionnaire from 29 August to 5 September 2019. Software used and data analysis: An input mask was created for data entry with the access software. The data has been exported to the Excel software for auditing and later to the Stata software for the realisation of tables and graphs.

main objective of this study is to assess the hypothesis of the increasing presence of migrants in Cotonou. The snowball method was used. It consists of distributing the survey questionnaire to people with the characteristics you are looking for, who, in turn, are asked to identify other people belonging to the population, and so on. The advantage of this method is that it is straightforward to implement, but it does not always provide a representative sample in some cases. As part of this study, a minimum of 500 individuals were surveyed to compensate for the non-representativity of our sample. Some neighbourhoods of the city of Cotonou are recognised as sites for foreigners. Thus, our survey was directed to these locations to reach the majority of individuals targeted by this study. Among these neighbourhoods, we have Zongo, Ganhi, Fidjrossè, Dantokpa, Akpakpa, and Haie Vive.

#### **2.4 Some results**

The analysis shows that the majority (more than 60%) of the respondents bought their property between 10 and 15 million F CFA. It appears that nationals buy more land than foreigners. A percentage of 57 against 37.

The analysis shows that the dominant religion currently in Cotonou is Catholicism, with 43.60%. This result confirms the results of the 2013 RGPH4. According to the last population and housing census, Catholicism is the dominant religion in Cotonou, with a rate of 51.2 % (INSAE, 2013:13)

The majority of those who migrate to Cotonou are those of Islamic religion. We should also note the appearance of two Asian religions (Buddhism and Taoism), which appeared among our respondents. It should be noted that people of these Asian religions live in Cotonou. Therefore, we must not lose sight of the fact that Asian religions will also now be represented in Cotonou. On the campus of Abomey-Calavi University, the Confucius Institute has been open since 2012. The objective is to teach the Chinese language to students who are interested in it. This also involves learning the Chinese culture. Therefore, the probability that some of these students will convert to Chinese religions, whether locally or in China, is insignificant. Consequently, the influence of Asian religions is a considerable parameter in the future of the city. This all demonstrates the need to reorient the methods of evangelization and to adapt them to these targets.

The theological institutions do not adequately include urbanisation in their curricula. In addition, they don't even address issues of urbanisation, migration, and development of the city. Urban theology seems like a new topic, particularly in the area of migrants. Some have 30 hours of teaching about urban ministry during three academic years. Probably, there is an absence of awareness of the presence of Asian migrants.

The Church is not always aware of the city's realities and strategies underway by decision-makers. We also noted the absence of a long-term development plan for

Religions	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Animism	21	4.20	4.20
Atheism	6	1.20	5.40
Buddhism	8	1.60	7.00
Catholic	92	18.40	25.40
Evangelical	86	17.20	42.60
Islam	281	56.20	98.80
Taoism	6	1.20	100.00
Total	500	100.00	

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents according to the religion practiced

Sources: Our field surveys, 2019

the city. Focusing on evangelization in this work, pastors of the following Churches of schools in Benin, West Africa received training: Baptist Bible Institute of Bohicon; Assemblies of God Bible School of Dassa; Baptist Superior School in Togo; Assembly of God Advanced School in Togo; International Faculty of Evangelical and Protestant Theology in Abidjan; and Christian Alliance Evangelical Faculty of Theology in Abidjan.

### 3. Migration

#### 3.1 Migration Through history

The Bible is a missionary book with a missionary purpose. The Mission's history began before the Great Commission. Since the dawn of time, there have always been migratory movements in the course of history. By his call and his vocation, Abraham was part of a migratory and missionary movement (Genesis 12:1-3) as well as his descendants. Christ also migrated to Egypt with Joseph, his adoptive father, husband of Mary, his mother. As much as Christ made humanity aware that they will always have the poor with them (Mark 14:3-9), until his advent, we will have migrants, foreigners among us, until the realisation of Maranatha!

The International Organization for Migration (IOM 2019:132), in its glossary on Migration, defines the migrant as "a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons." In Africa, South Africa, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria are the top three destinations for internal migration on



the continent (Baumard & Leparmentier, 2017). “Today, Africans in the South of the Sahara represent barely 10% of migrants from the planet, and most of these ‘displaced persons’ have just passed through a country neighboring their own. According to the IOM, in 2015, of the 32 million who took the road, half of them put their bags on their continent” (Baumard & Leparmentier, 2017)

International missions are shifting focus to urban centers, following migration patterns that indicated in 2008 that more than half the world’s population lives in cities. Fewer than 30 percent of the world’s 2.5 billion people in 1950 lived in cities. By 2050, almost 70 percent of the world’s estimated 10 billion people will do so, according to the United Nations (Zylstra, 2010).

With 60 years of independence, we still wonder if we are truly independent. In this sense, this situation of independence of the so-called “postcolonial” period bears the seeds of specific causes of migration in Africa. “By nature, we seek the comfort zone. Routine simplifies life and its many tasks. We settle as creatures of habit into a regular schedule. A component of comfort is familiarity. Inside the comfort zone, we feel secure. As Abraham Maslow affirms in the hierarchy of human needs, the need for safety and security are basic” (Pantoja, 2004:90).

The multiple causes of migration are found in the realities of the so-called “post-colonial” continent itself. Those in Africa’s realities represent a breeding ground favouring migratory movements. Indeed, Africa is a “victim of its immense wealth of mineral resources ... which are exploited only by Westerners who leave the continent in extreme and garish poverty without sharing with it the fruits of the exploitation of its resources” (Agbèdè, 2016:152).

### 3.2 Migrants in Cotonou

For politico-administrative authorities, the presence of foreigners is not an issue for anyone. It was only in 2002 that INSAE became interested in migrants. The 2002 census gives more information about Christians. “This city whose growth rate is slowed down, is gradually becoming a simply administrative, industrial and commercial city” (INSAE, 2015:8).

Benin has adopted a constitution which, in general, is found to be in conformity with international obligations with regard to the protection of migrants and refugees. Thus, the various aspects of the situation of migrants and their rights are addressed in various provisions relating to laws and regulations. A special favorable status is granted to nationals of WAEMU and ECOWAS. With regard to workers in general and migrant workers in particular, Benin has ratified several international conventions. We can therefore say that there is a certain political will in Benin to better manage international migration. At the same time, we must be aware of the

limits of the Treaties and of the only legislative and regulatory measures which are only of value if they are applied. Thus, the need arises for a real policy of international migration and its effective implementation in Benin (Hamidou & Kouton, 2006:4).

## **4. Towards an African urban migratory theology**

### **4.1 The centrifugal Mission since Pentecost**

Talking about the exiles in Babylon and focusing on Jeremiah 29, the Jews are in a position of migrants with a mission's purpose. They must look for and act as the Shalom of Babylon. Bakke (1997:85) stated, "theologically, these exiles were not victims; they were on mission from God." The Proselytes and God-fearing were attracted to Judaism.

On Pentecost Sunday (Act 2:5-11), "devout Jews from Africa – Egypt and the neighboring Libya of Cyrene – were among the privileged witnesses and participated in this new founding event of the Church of Jesus Christ. The fruits harvested that day were therefore spread from North-East Africa (Act. 2:9)" (Shank, 1996:14). Since Pentecost, the Mission shifted from centripetal and became essentially centrifugal; the Church is called to go outside and look for the lost, show them the narrow path of the Shepherd's Sheepfold, and make them disciples and pilgrims service of the Master. In the first century, the Gospel spread to big cities like Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Athens, Rome, and other places in the Mediterranean area. After the Reformation of the Church in the 16th century, the Protestant Mission remained silent until the Baptist missionary William Carey (1761-1834) intervened on the scene with his historical writing to launch the process of modern missions in his time; "*An Enquiry Into The Obligations Of Christians, to Use Means For The Conversion Of The Heathens In Which the Religious State Of the Different Nations Of The World, The Success of former Undertakings, and the Practicability of further Undertakings, are considered.*"

### **4.2 Being students of our cultural context and understanding the 21st century**

It is essential to be aware of the geo-political and geo-spirituality phenomena in this world, which influences migrants' movements and the new configuration of the city. As we know, the nations in this world through history are always trying to dominate one another. We can recall from the time of Assyria, Syria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Roman, etc. to today's great nations such as China, United States of America, Japan, United Kingdom, Nigeria, South Africa, etc. The superior nations wanted to be the only countries that dominate the world through war, economic embargo, petrol, fall of the dollar, and other restrictions – as a means to destroy other nations. This domination and power hungry behaviour contributes to migration because

people are looking for safety and security. Therefore, we must understand that a politically dominated mind impacts nations and spiritual areas. Today, there is a phenomenon of the Africanisation of cities in the United States and Europe, despite Africans' internal movement in Africa and the Asianisation of Africa. Globalisation, technology, politics, economy, and increasing the number of refugees and migrants have changed our world and strongly influenced migratory movements on earth in general and Africa in particular. Migrants are holding on steadfast to their religions, and mix with others cultures, religions, and revelations of Jesus Christ. In the current century, Christianity is strongly represented in the southern hemisphere as the West is de-Christianised. The way God calls us to accomplish the Mission has also changed. We need to use new strategies and opportunities that He is giving us through all of these events.

#### 4.3 Understanding the concept of 'Pentecost of the city'

What is shocking about the Old Testament is that Israel was blessed and didn't seek to be a source of blessing. In the Old Testament, until Pentecost, the Mission was essentially centripetal and called people to Jerusalem. Ray Bakke (1997:89-90), talking about Jerusalem and commenting on the book of Ezekiel 16:1-3, let us know that:

God suggest that from the beginning until now, Jerusalem has been a mixed-racial city. That mixed-racial community has become family. . . Israel wasn't a great nation because of its racial and ethnic purity; just the opposite was true. It was from the unwanted of other nations that God formed the people who lived in Jerusalem. God made them beautiful and great.

Through today's migrations, God is bringing nations and tribes to us in our cities as Cotonou for discipleship and allows migrants to access the Gospel through the hospitality and life of Christians engaged in society. One of the definitions that I propose and that we will have to remember about the Church is that it is a body made up of people of all nations, all tribes, all ethnicities, all people, and all the languages which are called to live together, collectively in the identity in Christ, which they have all accepted individually, while breaking down ethnic, racial and tribal barriers. Therefore, migration influences Church and theology.

The challenge is also *missiological*. As we move away from a world of nations to a world of interconnected multinational cities, it's clear that the frontier of Mission has shifted. The majority of the world's non-Christians will not be geographically distant people, but culturally distant people who often reside together within the

shadows of urban spires in the metro areas of every continent. Mission is no longer about crossing the oceans, jungles and deserts, but about crossing the streets of the world's cities. From now on, nearly all ministries will be cross-cultural amid the urban pluralism caused by the greatest migration in human history (Bakke, 1997:13).

We need to be aware of that and present the Gospel to the migrants from different nations gathered in Cotonou for various reasons as the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11) in Jerusalem. That is what we are calling 'Pentecost of the city.' It is no longer in Jerusalem, but in a city like Cotonou, where it is essential to preach the Gospel to other nationalities or migrants. 'Pentecost of the city' is a process toward a movement back to the centripetal mission method.

#### 4.4 Understanding the concept of African urban migratory theology

##### 4.4.1 Biblical base of calling the Church to rescue the migrant

Many Bible scriptures such as Exodus 22:21, Deuteronomy 10:17-18, Deuteronomy 14:28-29, Deuteronomy 24:19-22, Genesis 18, Hebrews 13:2, and others demonstrate that God wants us to show love, compassion, mercy, protection, and support in many areas for the poor, the foreigner, the migrant, the widow, and the orphan just as we must work for their socio-cultural and religious integration (Deuteronomy 16:10-14). "The message of the Bible is clear. Christians must act as Christians. Christians who are convinced that the inner cities of our nation present a crying need for compassionate relief will want to take their place personally and make possible a vigorous and effective Christian response" (Nelson, 1974:48).

In relation to legal and illegal migrants, the Lord expects us to be the voice of the voiceless. Beyond pastoral accompaniment, the Lord wants our responsibility to be engaged in improving the living conditions of migrants (Matthew 25:31-46; Proverbs 24:11-12).

Migration in a globalized world raises questions about inter-faith relations, identity, justice, racism, advocacy and diakonia. The World Council of Churches seeks to engage and challenge the churches in their work with migrants, including refugees, internally displaced people, and victims of trafficking. As the connections between xenophobia and racism are particularly strong, it emphasizes understanding new migration phenomena in a framework of transformative justice (World Council of Churches).

Therefore, the Church must be prepared to get involved in socio-political negotiations with those in power to help alleviate the suffering and miseries of migrants and regu-

larise their situations as human beings created in the image of God. Are we ready to stand in the breach to defend fragile and innocent lives? God continues to look for a man who will stand in the breach (Ezekiel 22:30), not only to pray but to take action in society to challenge religions, anthropologists, rulers, politicians, and sociologists to offer better conditions for migrants (Proverbs 31:8-9). Speaking about the African Carthaginian theologian Augustine's book, *The City of God*, Fritz Fontus (1982:13) declares with certainty that "Christian thinkers had long understood that the believer must lead a committed life in the city where God placed him."

We understand that

under God's eternal sovereign rule just now the earth is rapidly moving toward urbanization and Asianization. The power shifts are from Atlantic to Pacific; from rural to urban. This cannot be surprising to our Lord, and neither reality renders God impotent. That is some very obvious ways, the Gospel about an Asian-born baby Jesus Christ, who became a political refugee in Egypt, must be proclaimed with new appreciation in a world of massive migration; where Chinese, Japanese, Indians, and other Asians in urban diaspora on six continents have become the twenty-first century equivalents of first century Jews (Bakke, 1989:9).

#### 4.4.2 Meaning of African urban migratory theology

Our society will speak to our theology, and our theology must also speak to our society for its transformation and holistic development. The Bible talks about all subjects in life. Theology must listen, observe and engage with the city, and be aware of what happens. It must also think about those issues and challenges, and go deeper in the Bible to find and make reflections theologically.

Through 'Pentecost of the city,' we are going to bring migrants from several terrestrial ethnicities and several countries into the divine identity, into the ethnicity of God. By this entry into the ethnicity of God, we will take them to the Lord's table for the wedding of the Lamb. Thus, we will contribute to the fulfilment of the prophecy, "After that, I looked, and behold, there was a great crowd, that no one could count, of any nation, any tribe, any people, and any language. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, and palms in their hands" (Revelation 7:9).

The concept and goal of the Pentecost of the city highlights the importance of having an African urban migratory theology. Focusing on the arguments of a biblical base for calling the Church to rescue the migrant and considering the necessity of the 'Pentecost of the city,' African urban migratory theology argues and emphasises that it is crucial to make room for the foreigner and migrant, and allow him (her) to flourish.

Therefore following the ideas of Bakke, it is important that the city must be open to all nationalities and migrants. That idea is part of our migrant's theology and the concept of "Pentecost of the city," with the mind of the centripetal method. We should perceive the presence of the terrestrial migratory identities as an opportunity for service to offer celestial citizenship. "Uprooted from the cultural and family traditions, many migrant individuals become exposed to the gospel and experience the new birth in their newfound homelands or work locales" (Pantoja, 2004:79).

African urban migratory theology posits that migrants in African cities should be allowed to contribute to the development of the cities. The city will also benefit from the migrant's skills, talents, wisdom, knowledge, contacts, and networks (Jeremiah 29:7). Therefore, the presence of migrants is a blessing to a city.

Moreover, working through the mind of African urban migratory theology will open the doors to facilitate the realisation of the city's Pentecost by presenting the Gospels' necessary skills to all migrants. Therefore, it is important to rethinking the theological education system to equip ministers to accomplish the task of the 'Pentecost of the city.'

## **5. Rethink theological education as a means to accomplish 'Pentecost of the city'**

The great challenge in the spiritual area is the presence of Asia's religions, Islam and African religions. The theological school curricula must take into consideration those elements to prepare the next generation of God's servants to be able to present the heavenly citizenship to the immigrant. By studying Jesus's life of migrants, history of migration, and migration issues and rethinking the missionary's strategies of the first missionaries in Asia, we will update the theological education for urban transformation and the presentation of the City's Pentecost and immigrant's theology through African urban migratory theology. Additionally, the geo-strategy and geo-spirituality elements that can explain the cause of migration in Africa and the presence of migrants, why people migrate, and the state of migration in the world today need to be taken into consideration.

Through the Master of Transformational Urban Leadership and Theology Programmes we plan to have in our Institution (University Institute of International Development), theological education will be a process of change to engage urban realities as the presence of migrants in the city, and steps to contribute to a flourishing city to a successful curricula.

Change will be observed in the way we show the importance of a city and bring people to be more concerned about the city's realities through the curricula. It will be a change, a movement from concerning only heavenly matters to earthly issues, as well as for a flourishing city, a place where the Gospel is shared easily and can

bring development and holistic welfare in all areas in the city. The curriculum's methodology and strategies must put the city as classroom and daily homework. The city is the classroom, and the students will be aware of the spiritual cartography of the city by discovering the rooting and the impact of Islam, Asia's religions and esoteric groups as freemasons and African Religions as Voodoo. The professors must be trained to understand, accept, and follow the vision and have more practical than theoretical activities by studying the city and related with the city in all areas together with the students. The training must be more apologetic considering the inter-religious collaboration for peace-building without forgetting the necessity to present Christ. Hence, the relevance of this reflection is to awaken the Church and institutions of theological formations.

The theological education will present different types of migrants: Migrant investors (who are sometimes Freemasons, sectarians); Migrants in search of adventure, employment; and Migrants coming out of traumatic situations, with an opportunity to meet them in the city and to discuss, share and present the Gospel. The research methodology will allow describing the state of the city from many angles and make a projection for the year 2030/2050 and have statistics. In addition, each topic will have a survey and tour of the city.

Those reflections will be applied to society through the training of the servants of God who educate and advise through the political pastoral ministry toward those in power and in charge of the leadership of society. Christian education in the management of the city needs to be part of the curricula. The next generation pastors for 2050 will be more concerned with the city, and will relate with those in charge of the city, Christians and both citizens of heaven and earth. It is crucial that African Christians plan like God, who is also a visionary. We should train the students to engage in apologetics, sociology, psychology, and ground observance work in street, society, and news.

"Some elements are significant in evangelism for all people, like praying for wisdom, developing friendships, and loving people with the love of Christ and meeting their needs in the context of these relationships. There are some particular issues that are unique to evangelize Hindus, especially those living in diasporic settings" (Bhatia, 2019:105). By teaching and learning relation between Church and Government, the curriculum should include practical activities such as intercessory walk on the streets and the silent ministry in the city; visiting and a conference with the city's leaders and the mass to present the theological perspectives on the city's issues, particularly in our subject related to the migrant to whom we want to offer the heavenly citizen.

Finally, curricula need to be updated to face 2030-2050 realities and train specialists in immigrant's evangelization, particularly in foreign evangelization.

## 6. Conclusion

Cotonou will be a city of immigrants; Benin citizens are departing from the city for many reasons, and the immigrants are buying the lands. Together with Harvey Cox (Globalization, 2009:222-23), I affirm that a fundamental change in the nature of religiousness is occurring. The change assumes different shapes, but some of them overlap. With globalisation, religions are becoming less regional. Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and Hindus now live on every continent, particularly in the city of Cotonou.

As an African theologian and thinker of Africa, my prayer is that we African Christians of Africa today, basing on the Bible, do our part of this divine-human work by welcoming the migrant by making room for him in our midst. We must constantly remember that we are all strangers, travellers and pilgrims on earth for a short period awaiting our call for our individual entry into eternal bliss as citizens of earth and heaven. The earth is not our final destination, but the eternity in Christ's presence. In this bliss, being a Cameroonian, Mauritanian citizen, or the Yoruba, Dioula, Mina, etc., ethnic groups doesn't matter; there will only be believers in Christ, the only identity that prevails for eternity.

Therefore, the theological curriculum needs to equip God's servants for the great harvest in our generation to address all those religions and reach the migrants through and for the 'Pentecost of the city' to fulfil the vision of Revelation 7.9-10. Because "the task of redeeming our cities will be accomplished on the ground, one block at a time, by courageous people who take the daily risks that bring life to their corner of the world" (Lupton, 2005:223).

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