

# The Cross-cultural mission. An Agenda for Theological Education in Africa

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Christianity is growing rapidly in Africa and many other regions of the Southern hemisphere. This has resulted in widespread suggestion ( Walls, Jenkins, Bediako, Barratt) that Christianity in the South must undertake a new mandate aiming at carrying out a transcultural global mission .

A. Walls (1996), John Mbiti (1974), David Barratt, Kwame Bediako (1996, 2007), Jenkins (2007) and others suggested that the centres of the church's universality were no longer in Geneva, Roma, Athens, Paris, London, New York, but in Lagos, Buenos Aires, Kinshasa, Addis Ababa, Manila. As the Western Christianity shrugged to survive secularisation from damaging ideologies of different revolutions, the churches in the South show extraordinary vitality demographically and spiritually, with people of all age and class attending church activities and Sunday services.

Andrew Walls explores the conditions of the missionary expansion in the world<sup>1</sup>. After reminding the continuity in the presence of Christianity in Africa from the apostolic missionary movement, Walls comes to Edinburgh 1910, as land mark to the understanding of modern ecumenical and missionary movement, reminding that "Christianity began the 20<sup>th</sup> century a Western religion but ended the century as a non-western religion"( 64). The then forgotten Latin America, or Africa dismissed as soil of "cultures no fertile to the Gospel" have now become home of the movement of religious and theological experiment. 50 years back Western Christianity was the only source of missionaries and resources for the missionary movement. Christianity is characterised by advances, recessions, falling back, withering. Yemen, Syria, Jerusalem, Egypt, Libya, Carthage, North Africa, once Christian lands, are today the monopoly of Islam. In Europe many "unwanted churches have been turned into garages, furniture stores, night club", mosques and theatre halls (67).

Despite the generosity behind the appeal, Christianity in the South (Africa in particular) remains fragile, due to the incapacity to affirm its missionary identity and to adapt to rapid mutations as well as to learn from history; the weaknesses of its theological education. Several thousands of new members may join the church each single day, still this contribution argues, Christianity in the South is a giant standing on clay legs. And because of that, global pretensions from an impoverished South may be perceived as a threat towards the West. Sharing a new agenda for the future here resides the future of christianity.

## 1. A Global Mission or a Global Threat from the South?

While many observers see the growth and strength of Christianity in the South as a chance for the revival of Christianity worldly, others perceive it as a threat against the rich North. Jenkins is terribly concerned by the

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<sup>1</sup> Walls, A. *The Cross-cultural Process in the Christian History*, T&T Clark and Orbis Books, 2002.

disappearance of Christianity among the population and countries of "Caucasian" stock<sup>2</sup>. By 2050 the demography of 17 countries whose population will be over 100 millions only the USA and Russia are of Caucasian stock. Even with 25 most populated countries at that period, with a population over 70 millions the USA, Russia, Germany and Japan would be the only present day industrial countries to be on the list (Jenkins :99). The largest Christian communities in 2050 will be in the USA with an estimated Christian population of 330 millions mostly within the Latinos and Asian populations<sup>3</sup>.

The author is convinced that a threat is hanging over the West like a Damocles sword due to the growing demography of the south even among Christians. This he expresses in an Armageddon of ethno-religious conflicts in the South. In Africa ( he imagines scenes of ethno-religious imbroglio between Cameroon, Congo, Uganda, Sudan, Nigeria, Tchad) and he presents a similar situation for Asia where, he supposes an ethno-religious war in predominantly Muslim countries like Malaysia or Indonesia targeting a Chinese Christian minority would inevitably draw the intervention of China to protect their kin, thus creating a situation where the "Christian " West, the heralds of the values of democracy and human rights, will have no other option but to stand beside the Islamic countries to oppose China (Jenkins:221). Henceforth, the Coming of a Global Christianity from Jenkins's Western perspective is a potential apocalyptic end with the South combining demographic and religious growth to military powers posing a serious threat to the West.

### **A New African Personality to Reevangelise the World Christianity**

Opposed to the "Coming of a Global Christianity" is the book of Kamana, *The Mission of the African Church. For a New Global Ethics and a Civilisation of Hope* (Kamana, 2005). After assessing the weaknesses and strengths of the African, the American, European and their daughter, the Korean Christianity, Kamana says the former has a message to the other three. In part two called: "The African Church on the rescue of the World" he stresses the needs to dismantle the neo-capitalist spirit with its ultra-liberal ideology that nurtures Christianity, the culture of ideological, economical, political violence, exclusion and domination, uncertainty and social fabric fracture. The power of money is a perversion to be challenged: because those who have it dominated and imposed the type of Christianity; today the people who had nothing are emerging having the essential: Jesus-Christ, the power behind the new birth; the one who puts the paralytic and all sort of disabled onto feet again, the

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<sup>2</sup> Jenkins, P, *The Next Christendom. The Coming of Global Christianity*, OUP:2007.

<sup>3</sup> In 2050 Christian population in Brazil will be 195M; Mexico with 145 M; Philippines with 145 millions; Nigeria with 123M; D.R.Congo with 121M; Ethiopia with 79 M Russia with only 80 millions China with 60M and Germany with only 57 millions (Jenkins 104). That Christianity will be among Latinos, Chinese and people of Asian origin, African-American, is clearly demonstrated in today trends. The world's largest concentration of humans in 2015 and beyond will be in the South with the exception of Tokyo in Japan which is not a Christian country: Tokyo (26.4 M); Bombay (26.1 M); Lagos (23.1M); Dhaka (21.1M); Sao Paulo (20.4M); Karachi (19.2M); Mexico City ( 19.2M); Shanghai (19.1M); Jakarta (17.3M); Calcutta (17.3M); Delhi (16.8M) Metro Manila (16.8M).

One who announced the year of the Lord for the excluded and the marginalised ( 261).

However, Kamana says that it would be wrong to believe Christianity in the west is finished. The daughter of three strong geniuses: Jerusalem (or faith), Athens (knowledge) and Rome ( order and human rights), it remains a dormant giant, ready to jump again. European Christianity is there, in the subconscious; it survived many different perversions of successive revolutions up to today's one, globalisation. Europe, despite some excessive attitudes, example against the refugees, would not deny its Christian heritage. It may have betrayed Christian values in which case well wished spirits will remind her; no Europe can not descent under Christian ethics for she could then degenerate into barbarism and would cease to be "Europe" ( p. 268-276).

Kamana seems to minimise the lessons of history: the same "Christian Europe" whose imperial horizons and missionary expansion hide anti-black racism, perpetrated Slavery, Colonialism, genocides of indigenous populations. The task of the African Christianity and theology is to remind Europe and America that not only they betrayed the roots and spiritual and ethical values of Europe but the whole humanity; they made alliance and justified domination, exploitation and spoliation. Regardless poverty, Africa may be in a position to conquer the planetary village if it takes advantage of the unprecedented opportunities to benefit from others people's progress in education, health, agriculture and infrastructures; the capacity to improve the quality of life through the accumulation of knowledge, to eradicate poverty by the mobilisation of international resources; the access to world market and creativity for development. African theology may engineer a new initiative for the reevangelisation of the world, founded in a God of peace, justice and life, carrying out a project of the Civilisation of Love and human relations founded on mutual Understanding, creative Solidarity and Charity (Kamana 308). The church in Europe can be part of such an anti globalisation alliance on the condition it renounces its closeness with the neo-liberal forces.

Kamana's expectations towards African Christianity lose a perspective when he recognises that the African human is " in the waters" between two banks incapable of crossing either; on the one hand, the western culture they never commend. The African is rootless vis-a-vis their history and cultural traditions; a person left without guiding principles to commend respect from people of other civilisations; without rigorous engagement in the logic that commends modernity; without a global project for the future, rather depending on other people' decisions and slogans. The majority of Christians live in a sort of mediocrity never impacting on day by day management of society. The Church never evangelised that type of person. The result is a superficial Christianity because of "Christians" whose personality avoided a personal encounter with Christ (Kamana, 2005: 252).

Ethics and religion constitute the foundations of the formation of the personality and the organisation of society, yet he sees African institutions of education and academy dying out of lie, incapable of forming a class of men and women free from futile theories including gender, ready to manufacture a solid future. Two major shapes will be needed to edify that new vision: a person with a high capacity of listening and elaborating propositions and communicating their contributions; secondly a society that reflects, acts,

builds and sustains every initiative for future generations (260). Only such a renewed Christianity would challenge the Western model of Christianity that managed to spread the Gospel around the world, but has since become a “genetically modified” institution that evacuated God in their life (Vibila, 2007). Finally, Kamana's suggestion of a mutual enrichment between the African and Asian Churches, where the former share her experience of inculturation while the later help to integrate Asian experience in social, ethical emancipation, then the two join efforts for a project of love among people and between civilisations may open contentious areas with Jenkins's idea of the threat posed to the North by the Global South through migrations even ethnico-religious conflict on their own land, let's alone when it comes to a coalition.

## **2. A Church-Fraternity: Organic Theology versus Academic Theology**

The adventure of Christianity from the South must be well informed of the reality of today Christianity in the West. McGrath rightly questions the belief of some sociologists of religion who sustain that an European paradigm must be universal even in Christianity; he submits that Western Christianity is one paradigm among many others. This advocates for a new identity of theologies and ecclesiologies that can adapt and sustain the new missionary entrepreneurs which is not an easy task. In fact, most of the well established institutions of theological education remain the milieus of different representations, emanation of churches of colonial institution; they were detached from the day by day reality of the African people. The perpetuation of an ecclesiology and a form of spirituality that is no longer a model in the West does not impact on the African society. “What the Churches stand for, the Churches have forgotten” Kounkou says. Distinguishing two forms of ecclesiology, “the Churches of colonial institution” and “the churches of African expression”, he said the former satisfy themselves with exposing the illness and deadly danger facing the Africa continent, whilst the later heal and balm the African scars, its household, family, country and continent. The hierarchy of colonial institutional churches failed to restructure so to promote “a church-family”, indispensable to Africa; they programmed the spiritual death of the continent because they refuse to stir up social, political, psychological drogues, orchestrated against the children of God- structural injustices, all sort of bigotry- rather the churches of African expression, overcame ecclesiological antagonisms, and under spiritual revival, they demystified social positions that alienate the consciences of men and women ( Kounkou, 2003:127-135). If then as McGrath<sup>4</sup> and Kamana suggest, the resilience of religion is more than proved, then the question of the model of ecclesiology and theology that the South would have as tools to fulfil and sustain its new mandate<sup>5</sup> remain unresolved.

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<sup>4</sup> Religion will continue to be part of a global culture” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with some adaptations, in the form of “an amalgam” of Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and revivalist or conservative forms of Protestantism, constructed according to taste. McGrath, A. *The Future of Christianity*, Blackwell: 2002(25/27).

<sup>5</sup> Christianity is in decline in the West yet the Korean situation reminds that the global story is far from simple. Growing from 800,000 Protestants in 1957 to more than 5.294,000 in 1978 (and 1,144,000 Roman Catholics), today Korea sends out Christian missionaries to

## **2. Innovative Ecclesiology: “Belonging and Believing”**

The core of McGrath's book may be his vivid criticism of the academic theology and the McDonaldization's of Christianity- the Alpha Course is one characterisation of such a phenomenon- as opposed to the organic theology. Academic theology damaged the Church and faith community. It dominates social discourse disconnecting Jesus from the Bible and the faithful. It has a problem of accountability - Karl Barth considers an important aspect of theology<sup>6</sup> for it sees itself par of the secular social sciences, answering to the academy rather than the church. In fact it has “more to do with elitism, ideological warfare and the principled cultivation of a discernibly anti-religious ethos, with some theologians apparently willing to be little more than acolytes to these academic and cultural trends” (145). .

The Organic theology on the opposite deals with the believers who continually try to reconnect and to found new experiences in worship; support the world-view of their community, liberating it from the hegemony of the establishment. An organic theologian is an activist who sees their task as supportive and systematic within the community of faith and as evangelistic and apologetic of popular culture outside, whilst the academic theologians tend to sneer at popular culture and ridicule it. Judiciary McGrath notices that much of Christianity in Africa grew among early converts who were at the margins of society, such as slaves, women and the poor. Today African Christianity, like the latin american is a decentralised christianity, mainly the result of the establishment of indigenous African communities which provided catechists and pastors to the growing number of converts (33). It is a Christianity led by Africans, preached by Africans, showing little interest in mimicking the western ways of thinking. Whether this form of Christianity will adapt and be able to impact on a West imbued with neo-liberal ideology, different social and political world-views, is questionable.

## **3. Theological Education: A centenary of Ostracism**

Whether the African Christianity would be in a position to establish itself in the North and help to break the bounds of academic theology, sustain the organic church depends on the agenda of theological and ministerial formation. In this section we intend to demonstrate that the dispersion and multiplicity of institutions of education in the protestant churches with meaningless resources is a scandal that needs to be addressed.

### **3.1. Theological Education in Africa: Fifty Years Ago and Now**

Like today, fifty years ago, the formation of ministers and servant leaders to sustain a growing Christianity was a matter of concern for the ecumenical

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nations through-out Asia, Europe, the USA, Africa, Australia; it catalysed churches' programmes of social action from the 1960s. There is also evidence strongly suggesting major growth in Christianity within China despite official hostilities.

<sup>6</sup> K. Barth had a habit to open his lectures by a prayer or a hymn. Thus pointing to the close link between theology and adoration, piety and reflection. This habit has been lost in most of liberal theologies.

family. In 1950 Stephen Neil and Goodell conducted a survey<sup>7</sup> in “almost all of the institutions in which training for the ordained ministry was being carried in”. Their reflections still of relevance today: “A church does not flourish unless its ordained leadership is adequate to the spiritual needs of the lay people of the Church, and able to take its part with insight and courage, in the development of national as well as of ecclesiastical life”. They noticed that “The progress of the church, and especially in the last three decades, has been so rapid, and the part played by Christians in the life of the African countries is so remarkable as to hold out the hope that in fifty years time, tropical Africa might be in the main a Christian continent” ( Neil,1950:4).

To be able to speak to the situations in the power of the Word of God, and to related the past to the present, the minister must be theologically trained. This involves processes that still missing in today theological education as indicated in our recent survey below: intellectual disciplines and study; time planning, resourcing both human and material; teachers interacting with students in humility and never failing to learn even from their students; wrestling with the meaning of the Word of God in as diverse changing situations, from the “pagan life practices “of the anthropologists to pagan patterns in post-Christendom western societies. Goodell suggests that “ With the rapid growth of a more educated African population there are pressing needs for African ministers to have formal education that does non lag far behind that of those they minister” (Goodell, 1954:43) is more relevant today. Recent crisis in universal ethics appeal to a more digging in biblical thinking and in nature of Christian traditions in the history of the Church, to provide guidance to society in general and to the community of faith in particular.

Goodell witnessed the situations of “One-Man College” where a single person carried most of the burden of the institution; he suggested that a theological college needed at least three persons with a labour division as follows: Old Testament, and Church History; New Testament and Doctrine; Ethics and Pastoral Theology. He insisted on the teaching of Church history, a particular church or confession, the history of the church in Africa would challenge the “new sects” or the “splinter groups”. The African theological student needs to realise that he belongs to a Church which has a history, to see the developments, the tensions and the problems of his own local community as Church history being acted and re-enacted”; they must be taught the turmoil and contradictions of church history in Europe (the crusades, the religious wars, the papal conflicts, the monarchs strikes with the popes some resulting in the creation of most dominant confession today). With regard to pastoral theology and homiletics, he emphasised contextualisation with a “sermon” resourcing in African context to sustain the worship and spiritual life of community. Neil underlined another still area of concern, cooperation in the production of relevant theological literature in commentaries on the Bible, doctrine, church history, African church history, biographies of Christian leaders of all ages, Christian ethics and pastoral theology ( Neil, 1950:28/9).

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<sup>7</sup> Survey conducted for the account of the International Missionary Council.

Though the general picture was of newness<sup>8</sup>, the survey reported that Christian constituency represented more or less 15% of the entire population of the continent. Christianity has huge influence; there were wide areas in which every single chief of importance was a Christian. In comparison, for four centuries India received the best of the missionaries, and in 1950 India had 5 theological schools of university degree whilst Africa had biblical schools, yet Christian community in India was slightly more than two per cent of the Indian population.

Neil said: “ the shortage of trained and ordained ministers is one of the most serious weaknesses in the equipment of the Church. The majority of African Christians live in small and scattered groups, which makes the supervision and spiritual care more difficult”<sup>9</sup>. Yet only a handful of potential servant leaders have found it possible to leave their families, their farms and their vocations to spend 9 or 12 months a year in a central Bible school. To cling on such “long-established, highly-cherished pattern of theological education we shall reach only a fraction of the total number of potential church leaders in any country” (Ralph Winter:1969). As indicated in the tables below the parallel of the situation Winter described 55 years ago and today's is disturbing.

### 3.2 The Urgent Task: Overcoming Ostracism

In 2003 we surveyed 17 theological institutions (including 3 Roman catholic) in francophone Africa<sup>10</sup>. 5 years now, the situation might have changed: Porto-Novo and Yaoundé have become Protestant Universities for West and Central Africa; Butare is transforming into the Protestant Institute for Humanities each of them with at least two faculties in addition to theology. Yet as shown in a 2008/9 quick survey of 9 institutions, the progress is slow: a huge lack of resources and ostracism affects different aspects. Tables one and two present the protestant and Roman Catholic institutions surveyed in 2003, the third table presents those surveyed in 2008/9.

**Table 1: Statistics of Some Protestant Institutions (2003)**

Institute	Creation year	Pop. students	Programmes	Volumes in Library	Acad. Staff
U.P.C-Kinshasa	1959 [1994]	153 (2003) -	- Bachelors - Master - Ph.D.	10000	32 (incl. 16 visiting)
F.T.P.Y Yaounde	1962 [2007]	150 (2003) -	- Bachelors - Master - Ph.D.	17500	16 (6 vis.)

<sup>8</sup> The first baptism in Kikuyuland took place only in 1906 (in Rwanda, 1911 for the first protestant missions), the first ordination of a deacon in Uganda only in 1879.

<sup>9</sup> In Uganda, the average is one ordained minister for 5000 baptised Christians; in Nigeria it was one minister for 3000 baptised. To that end, the church owed much to faithfulness and devotion of lay men, and women who carry on under conditions of great isolation, with little spiritual help.

<sup>10</sup> Exchange (vol. 3/2003)

Inst. Theol. Prot [UPAO] Porto Novo, Ben. Togo, Ivory Cost.	1920 [2005]	- 33 (2003) 2 programs	- Diploma - Master	5000	- 4 permanent - 4 visitors
Inst. Luth. Meiganga	- [1994]	30 2 programs	- Diploma - Bachelor	9300	4 permanent
Presby. Sem. Kumba, Cam.	1898 [1994]	70 (2003) 2 programs	- Diploma - Bachelor	5950	10
Bapt. Inst. Ndiki, Cam.	- [1997]	31 2 programs	- Diploma - Bachelor	-	-
Inst. T. P. Ndoungue, Cam.	Early 1930s [1997]	43 (2001/2) 2 programs	- Diploma - Bachelor	5000	10
I.T.P. Bibia, Cam.	Early 1920s [1998]	30 2 programs	- Diploma - Bachelor	5000	2
F.T.P.B, Butare Rwanda [2009]	1970 [1990]	70 (2003) 2 programs	- Diploma - Bachelor	8000 [23,000]	- 4 Permanent - 12 visiteurs
ULPGL, Goma- RDC	1980s	1000 (Univ: 4 fac)- 2001/2 100 Theol.	- Diploma - Bachelor - Master	5000	- 100 - 10 in Theol.
F.T.EC Mansimou Congo-Brazza	- [1998 ]	30 (2001/2)	- diploma - Bachelor	-	-1 Ph.D. Permanent + teaching staff
FTEMEC, Yaounde Cam.	1996	16 (2003)	- Bachelor	More or less 500	2 permanent - visitors
FTEB, Bangui RCA	1977	96 (2001/2)	- Bachelor - Master	17000 + 80 periodicals	8 Permanent (5 Ph.D)
FTEAB, Abidjan, Ivory Cost	-	150	- Bachelor - Master		10 permanents

Source: Gatwa in Exchange vol. 2 (2003)

**Comments:** These are the major theological institutions in protestant francophone churches, Madagascar not included. 14 institutions providing programs from diploma (equivalent of a Secondary School degree), Bachelor to Masters and Ph.D. have less than a thousands students (1000) all together. The total estimate population of these countries in 2003 was more or less 135 millions [with more or less 30% to 50% of the population being Protestant].

**Table 2: Statistics of Some Roman Catholic Institutions (2003)**

Institution	Creation Year	Pop. Students	Prog. offered	Volumes/ library	Numb.Ac. Staff
FCK-Fac. Cath. Kinshasa	1954	-2001/2:4 Fac - 991 students	- Bachelors - Masters - Doctorate	- 31000 -706 period.	110 of whom 41 permanent
ICAO, Abidjan	1975	- 2001/2:5 fac - 630 students	- Bachelor - Master	- 60,000 -370 period.	-23 permanent -51 visitors
UCAC, Yaoundé, Cam.	1991	- 2001/2:5 fac -1300 stud.	- Bachelor - Master - Doctorate	- 39,000 -592 period.	190 of whom 56 residential

Source: Idem

**Comments:**

FCK: Facultes Catholiques de Kinshasa. UCAO: Institut catholique d'Afrique de l'Ouest; UCAC: Universite catholique d'Afrique centrale.

The population in each of these catholic universities outnumber the total student population of the 14 protestant institutions surveyed. In addition to these universities, the roman Catholic church has Minor and Superior Seminaries for each diocese, plus always interdiocesan seminaries, plus many Institutes for Catechism or biblical studies. The situation has terrifically improved in recent years with for example the Roman catholic in Rwanda creating 5 Universities in Ruhengeri, Byumba, Kibungo, Kabgayi and Butare.

**Table 3: Protestant Institutions surveyed in 2008/9**

Institution	Creation year	Pop. students	Prog. offered	Vol. Library	ac. staff
Daystar Univ, Nairobi,	- 1952 - 1974 - 1985	2008/9: 3662 students	- Diploma - Bachelor - Master	80,000 Campus Rithi Valley	250

Kenya [Self-Reliant]					-20,000 at Nbi campus
St Paul's, Limuru, Kenya	155 years Old	-2008/9: 4 fac - 1000 stud. - Divinity:300	- Certificates - Bachelor - Master	-40000	
Lumiere, Bujumbura, Burundi	1990s	2008/9:5 fac. - 2000 stud.	- Bachelor - Master	10000	- 127 -20 permanent
Espoir d'Afrique, Bujumbura, Burundi	- 1992 - 2000	2008/9:6 fac. 1800 students	- Bachelor - Master -Doctorate (general Medecine)	15000	-100 - 30 perm.
Ricatla, Near Maputo, Mozambique	1958	2008/9 55 students	- certificates - Diploma	- 5000 (!)	- 6 permanent -12 part time
Justo Mwale, Zambia	1951	2006/7 112 students	- Certificates - Bachelor -Women, Ministry and lay leadership	14700	-
Zomba Theol. Sem., Malawi	-	2008/9 107 students	- Certificates - Bachelor	- " Not big but good"	9 permanent
Sabamu, Sagamu, Nigeria		2008/9 270 students	- Certificates - Bachelors	15000	

Source: Notes of present' investigation 2008/9

**Comments:**

Unlike the church founded and financed institutions the newly created ones, Daystar, Lumiere, Espoir d'Afrique belong to Christian leaders, lay and clergy who ventured to invest in education; they apprehend the challenges of society and envision to offer an appropriate answer. They jumped in the gap to propose an answer to the recurrent impasse of African Christianity and society requiring qualified personnel at the time the ecumenical partners, major financial sponsors of theological institutions were withdrawing. Whether the demand is proportional to the quality of the institution is not at stake in present circumstances due to the absence of multiple choices.

These educationist entrepreneurs cope more or less well to changing contexts of the university environment including aspects of accreditation and standardisation, moving from begging aid to raising funds locally and internationally, adopting marketing model. This type of Christian leadership enjoys an autonomy from the church hierarchy and church bureaucracy.

The more these institutions put laureates on the market, the more they impact and attract demands within the youths. The achievements in a short period is impressive compared to more than 50 years old church founded and financed institutions: Lumiere has graduated more than 4000 in 10 years whilst the entirely subsidised Butare graduated only 310 laureates in 38 years; Justo Mwale, Zambia graduated 270 laureates in 55 years; Ricatla graduated 1 laureate in 2008.

### 3.3. Intellectual, Pastoral...ostracism

One of the serious danger facing church funded theological institutions in Africa is manifested in the ostracism that characterises each of the many we assessed. Firstly, the **Intellectual Ostracism** due to dramatic deficiency: from the infrastructures to libraries, academic staff, adapting to a university environment. The majority of Christians and of the general public in Africa today expect the theologians to go further, not necessarily to leave oral culture itself behind, but rather to really strategise for the education of their communities. The situation may be gradually changing but a few years ago there were no established programmes at a wider academic level leaving the issue of standardisation and accreditation open for many. The second challenge is **Denominationalism**. The autonomy of the churches coincided in many cases with the effort of the ecumenical family to trigger the creation of ecumenical institutions to bring about unity among the churches. But they have returned gradually to denominationalism to compete with some schools founded by groups which broke off from the institutional churches, or bible schools founded by the missions for teachers of catechism which never cut their umbilical cords from the "mother missions"<sup>11</sup>.

Today Church leaders are nationals more trained than 50 years ago. But Antoine Babe and Paulin Poucouta rightly point out that many Africans have taken the reins without fully understanding the responsibility involved in, for

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<sup>11</sup> Hence the schools have remained the "Baptist Institute of A, the Lutheran Institute of B, the Presbyterian seminary of C, the Methodist Seminary of X, the Anglican Institute of Y, etc. Rev. John Gatu; Rev. Nyambura Njoroge, alumni of St Paul's Limuru, ecumenical leaders ask the same question: why St Paul's failed to bring church unity which was its mandate?

example, truly preaching the Gospel which liberates people from colonisation, spiritual imperialism and financial mendicancy, and cures them of the stigma of racial prejudices<sup>12</sup>. Very few have made the effort to inculturate the Gospel, to say nothing of emphasising the role of Africa in the history of salvation and the centrality of church history.

**Ostracism in the pastorate** as consequence of the mediocrity in training and formation results in the insufficiency of general culture. It follows the African pastor or theologian into her/his ministry. This results in the absence of dialogue between theologians themselves, between the theologian and the people of God or with society at large. In various issues: Climate change, exploitation and looting of the ecosystems and other natural resources, the impoverishment and marginalisation of the populations, the “crochardisation” of the intellectuals, HIV/AIDS, ethnico - politically motivated conflicts... the minister is poorly prepared, incapable of becoming a mediator for a dialogue to be possible to resolve the crises.

African Christianity may be able to help reevangelise the West on the condition training and formation empowers with general knowledge, openness to world cultures to convey digestible message to all nations. Blyden methods accurately advised the acquisition of scientific knowledge, and familiarity with major world languages and world religions (V.Y. Mudimbe).

### 3.4. Methodology and Theological Thought

African Christianity must be proud of the fact that large parts of Africa were evangelised by men who had been carried off as slaves, rescued and taken to the African Asylum in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in Bagamoyo East Africa or in India. Among well known ordained ministers -other than in early Church or in Roman catholic Churches were Jacobus. E.J. Capitein<sup>13</sup>, Philip Quaake, the most prominent of them, Adjai Crowther. After the erection of Sierra Leone to bishopric in 1852 no less than 17 African had been ordained in the first 10 years and worked in Sierra Leone and in Nigeria. In East Africa, the two Africans to be ordained in connection with the CMS were also former slaves rescued, taken to African Asylum in India and received education and training to Christianity, William Jones and Ishmael Semler.

These early precedents as Fashole-Luke points out did not result in the production of local theologies. But can we produce proper theologies without school of thought. John Parratt was right to point out that the theologians who were making impact in the 1980s were those who sorted out the issue of methodology<sup>14</sup>. He distinguished two trends: the African theologies dealing with the questions of adaptation and contextualisation and the Black theology,

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<sup>12</sup> Babe, *Eglises d'Afrique: de l'emancipation a la responsabilite*, Luvain-la Neuve, 1998; Pucouta, *Lettre aux Eglises d'Afrique*, Yaounde, UCAC, 1997.

<sup>13</sup> A native of the Gold Coast, who was educated at the university of Leiden, presented a doctoral dissertation in 1700 in which he defended the practice of slavery, was admitted to the ministry in a Protestant Church then sent to minister in slaves El Minah Castle, Gold Coast (in stand-by to the non return journey ); he died in 1747.

<sup>14</sup> Parratt, 1981 *Methodologies in African Theologies*. A paper presented in the First forum of African Theology in Malawi. Parratt mentions among others: Bolaji Idowu, Henry Sawyer, John Mbiti, Kwesi Dickson, Fashole-Luke, Charles Nyamiti, Manas Butherezi.

Southern Africa inspired. The was concerned with the relevance of theology in a context of oppression, discrimination and exploitation, liberation and from the anthropological view.

Later in 19<sup>th</sup> century, E.W. Blyden, the father of panafricanism, according to V.Y. Mudimbe, questioned the superficiality of Christianity on the Africa continent. He strongly criticised its incapacity to take roots in the cultures of African societies, calling the intellectuals for more rigour in methods and organisation, in formation various areas of knowledge including in sciences and graeco-roman languages. Unless African Church produces genuine biblical scholars, African theology will be “sterile, bankrupt and unworthy of the African tradition that nurtured the Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine and others” as Fashole-Luke observed (Parratt, 1981:8).

### **Identity, Ecclesiologies and Mission**

To preserve and rehabilitate the social harmony and ethics in Africa a new understanding of power and authority and how they both impact on mission was necessary. The contribution of the africans to the universal christianity arises from the identity of theology that forms out of processess of contextualisation, rehabilitation of social harmony and ethics in Africa founded on a new alliance of fraternity and reconciliation. Inevitably, engaging process include revisiting Ethics of african cultures and the systems founded on religious, moral, political and spiritual belief; the extent to which we have been successful in raising into universal virtues the african values of ubuntu, solidarity, hospitality, humanness, dialogue and mediation.

Fossouo studied the kingship of western Cameroon, showing the monarchs were enthroned by their people in the systems founded on religious, moral, political and spiritual belief<sup>15</sup>. The monarch ruled by consensus and the sanction of God in each decision. For him this was the proof of the presence of the Verb that sews power in the institution and there is a possibility of holiness and saints at stake in those kingships. Though Fossouo leaves out the whole issue of the enslavement of the individual by cultures and traditions in these monarchies<sup>16</sup>; his reflection is of crucial relevance for an interfaith dialogue.

A. Quenum proposes a new alliance of fraternity and forgiveness as in Mt 18.16. The Church must examine its link with the power, questions the notion of “the father of the nation” who never hesitates to kill his sons and daughter, or the “father of the family” never available for his house hood. Both must give way to an exercise of power in a form of the delegation the way, God the Father did (Quenum:2007). Training and formation in a context where the majority of people were deprived of the basics requires listening and not a savant but a listening and sustaining ecclesiology; to revisit the notions of paternity and maternity for a new meaning from male domination or reproduction to the Old Testament reference of rock, tenderness and love or the New Testament's idea of the Church as a Virgin, a young spouse, a mother. Such a reform of ecclesiology needs to be reflected in curricula with

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<sup>15</sup> Cheza and Van Spijker (ed) *Theologies et Theologiennes dans l'Afrique d'aujourd'hui* 2007

<sup>16</sup> Gatwa, in Spijker and Cheza, 2007:6

the vision of what Cardinal Malula called “Eglise-Fraternite”, resourcing in the life of the people.

Theological education in Africa has an history that goes back to diverse manifestations of christianity in Europe. Many african scholars (T. Njoya, M. Oduyoye, Vibila, Yinda, Togboga) separately, question the adhesion to a model of Western Christianity which managed to evacuate God in their ethical values whilst Africa couldn't preserve and raise into universal virtues its values. Thus, we ought to avoid withdrawing God from the western ideologies to enslave Him in the African cultures and civilisations; they also have their shining and darkest aspects. They endured the crisis of identity, exclusions of all sort (Togboga: 2007) including the enslavement and inferiorisation of women.

In the second half of the last century various attempts were made to reconstruct theological discourse from the substance of African contexts marked by : traditional religions; the chock of civilisations (Western, Islamic, African); inculturation or contextualisation; the moratorium, the emancipation of young churches and the relations they would maintain with the “mother churches”; political violence and militarisation, poverty and pandemics like HIV/AIDS and Malaria.

From its creation in Kampala in 1963, the AACC played a significant role in underlying the need for the development of such an African theology. In the 1970s it initiated the concept of Moratorium advocating for Self-hood, articulating a theology of reconstruction of Africa, physical reconstruction but above all social, moral and ethical reconstruction. This debate however stopped short from fertilization. Its advocates lost a common thrust and get engaged in activities of different sort. Theology, according to Mbiti finds its expression in the life of community: “ I am because you/we are, and You are because I am”. Visibly Christian mission is not isolated but interdependent for our witness has significance if only we share our personal stories and experiences. Should the Moratorium had fertilized, developed into a school of thought that Christianity in both hemispheres would had avoided today emptiness lamented by the father of the African Moratorium : “ If people had listened and received generously the moratorium we should not been where we are now, desperate, short of initiatives”<sup>17</sup>.

### **A Cross- Fertilization to channel the Cry of the People**

By contrast, a fertilization occurred between Roman Catholic scholarship and the negro-renaissance movement of 1920s voiced by the influential W.E. Du Bois, the Negritude movement fathers (Cesaire, L.S. Senghor, Damas), the Bantou philosophy and the inculturation movement for, as Messi Metogo put it, theology has always borrowed from philosophy. In 1925 father F.Aupiais, a missionary in Benin published *La Renaissance africaine*, and two decades later was published *La Philosophie Bantoue* (the Bantu Philosophy,1949) of father Tempels, a missionary in Congo. The first generations of african theologians, Kagame, Mulago, resourced in these philosophies. Two schools

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<sup>17</sup> Rev. Dr John Gatu (85) addressing young theologians during the AACC 9<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute, Maputo 1-12 December 2008.

of theological thought developed in francophone Africa, Kinshasa and Yaounde. In Kinshasa theologians Mulago, Ngindu Mushete, Oscar Bimwenyi-Kweshi, Mgr Tharcisse Tshibangu or Cardinal Joseph Malula were influenced by the ideas of Placide Tempels and Alexis Kagame<sup>18</sup>.

When the nations under colonial rule sealed their unity for liberation during the 1955 Bandoeng conference, Kagame was defending his doctoral thesis of philosophy in Rome, *La Philosophie Bantu-Rwandaise de l'Etre* which was published in 1956<sup>18</sup>, Cheik Anta Diop exposing his theses that reacted like a bomb shell as he demonstrated the primacy of the African civilisations and the link between the black and the Egyptian civilisations, *Les pretres noirs s'interrogent* was published (1956), the contributors laid the foundations of the theology of inculturation.

Kagame acknowledges the influence of Father Tempels, yet criticised his parochial approach generalising a research restricted to the Baluba people of Congo. He extended his study to a vast geographical area of Bantu civilisation; and in 1969, in "The Place of God and man in Bantu Religion", he showed that human is the centre of the universe, not as individual, but as a humanity. In 1956, a young Congolese priest, Father Vincent Mulago, joined Kagame in the struggle for an incultured Christianity. Mulago, from the Bashi culture, in the East of Congo closely linked to Rwandan and Burundian, first arose opposing colonial injustices, then engaged in education and became key figure in the movement of inculturation. In 1966, he founded the Centre for Research on African Religions (CERA) and published a Journal, *Les Cahiers du CERA*, that became a pivotal tool for the African theological thought in the Catholic faculties of theology. From then onwards, the Kinshasa School embarked in the "inculturation" of the Gospel stressing the emergency of African way of impacting on Christianity as the most outspoken of them, Malula put it during the 1974 synod of bishops in Rome: "the missionaries christianised Africa, today it is the turn of the Africans to africanise christianity" (Gatwa,2007:9). The School of Kinshasa was morally sponsored by the Catholic hierarchy. Cardinal Joseph Malula invested his huge moral authority in the defence of the poor and the catholic principles against a dictatorial regime of Mobutu on one side, on the other defended the expressions of his people in liturgy and celebration which resulted in the recognition by the Vatican of the "Congolese Rite".

The Yaounde School of thought of which the late father Engelbert Mveng, Jean Marc Ela, Meinrad Hebga and the philosopher Eboussi Boulaga were emblematic figures, persistently rejected the marginalisation of African Christianity wherever it comes from, even from the centre, Rome, in the name of orthodoxy. JM Ela suggests that the African churches must reinvent the sense of the mission, read the Bible, regard the God of revelation with the "eyes of our people" not with the Aristotle categories (Ela, 1985). He persistently expressed his "Cry as an African" questioning the perpetuation of the western economical, cultural, religious imperialism even in liturgy and

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<sup>18</sup> Kagame, a priest of the Rwandan indigeny, started as early as 1938 the movement of inculturation, producing a monumental work and adapting from his vast scholarship in literature and linguistics, theology and Bible translation in addition to ethno-history. One of his vast publications was the *Divine Pastorale* an adaptation of the Rwandan vast pastoral poetry to the Psalms.

Eucharist<sup>19</sup> refusing to listen to the cries of the periphery. For the Yaounde school the church must speak out a message that liberates the people from colonialism, cynical political-military systems, spiritual imperialist and reject eternal financial begging; it must invest in healing the racial stigmas that maintain the South in a position of second class Christianity. Eboussi Boulaga questioned the issue of absolute revelation and the occupation of the space for dialogue of cultures and religions as well as the missionary discourse in relation to the African resistance to a bourgeois Christianity. Calling for a Roman catholic version of the moratorium<sup>20</sup>, Eboussi Boulaga suggests that since Christ's model was the symbol of permeability, impoverishment, humbling before he was exalted, a new orientation of faith community, new rules for conversion and new schemes of actions appear indispensable. Hebga continues to defend the idea that there is no "happiness for the people of Africa, even in the churches, if others continue to reflect and decide on their behalf" (Hebga:1995). Sadly, the Yaounde school has been dismantled, E. Mveng was murdered in 1995 (his death was never elucidated), JME was forced to exile whilst Eboussi Boulaga retracted to conscientising civil society and the youth on national and international challenges of today.

### **Factors for a Theological Thought**

Both Kinshasa and Yaounde benefited from the possibilities of publishing in Paris, Brussels, Rome and through Presence Africaine (1947) and the Editions CLE, Yaounde (1963). The achievements these two schools reached were due to solid intellectual formation within the White Fathers and the Jesuits orders, completed by strong university education tradition and significant impact of disciplines like philosophy, anthropology, ethnology and sociology, linguistics and history which have been the weakest side in the protestant education in general. The young contributors who underlined fundamental issues facing African Christianity in *Les Pretres Noirs s'interrogent* became great names of African intelligentsia, Kagame, Mulago, Kebga, Eboussi Boulaga, Malula.

In West Africa, the scholarship was basically inspired by the ISCR, a catholic body concerned with catechism, pastoral and ministerial formation, sometimes with inculturation and never on specific political and social problems. In such a context where Christianity lives as a minority in an Islamic environment, the missionary power is higher than ever. Here the missionary influence came from the Missionary Society of Lyon which has no strong intellectual orientation; there may be some exceptions of high calibre personalities in Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso even Senegal like Cardinal Yago, the Archbishop of Abidjan and his Auxiliary, Mgr Dacoury-Tabley. These two

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<sup>19</sup> One of his criticisms, the use of wine and bread in Eucharist from the Mediterranean farming world on the detriment of the Agriculture of Africa.

<sup>20</sup> The Moratorium is an idea launched by the Kenyan theologian, John Gatu in early 1970s asking for a halt of the unilateral sending of missionaries and finances from the North to educate the churches of the South for more mature and responsible mutual relations with the churches and missionary organisations in the North. The call found echoes in the All Africa Conference of Churches assembly, Lusaka 1974. Despite the fact that it was strongly resisted both in the North and the South, the Moratorium impacted on the life of many Christian leaders who engage in many different ways in the search for self-reliance of their churches.

initiated actions for human rights and justice for the poor; during the periods of political turmoil they stood beside the students violented by the police; “sacrilege”, they opposed President Houphouet Boigny’s monumental and costly construction of the Basilica Notre Dame de La Paix in Yamousoukro. They perceived it as an arrogance in a country where people died from poverty and diseases. Mgr Dacoury-Tabley refused to attend John Paul II’s consecration of the Basilica.

## **Empower People to Great Faith for Global Mission ?**

Like the apostles, Peter and Paul, in the footstep of Jesus, the early missionary movement, the 18 and 19<sup>th</sup> movement<sup>21</sup> were all a result of a miracle: people many from poor upbringing (former slaves, Perpetua, St Augustine, Williams Carey, Robert Moffat and others) had one major investment in common but faith in the power of the Spirit of God to move all over the world. As we look closer to these individuals’ story, we discover the power of a strong spirituality, organisation and abnegation.

A. Walls suggests that the existence and success of a missionary movement reposes on a number of prerequisites. Firstly, ecumenism as source of togetherness and friendship, secondly, Pietism (e.g. in Central Europe, German and Britain) was source of religious dynamism; people who accepted martyrdom, backed by a tradition of learning and a commitment to philanthropy (Francke ; Prince Zinzerdorf in Halle and Herrenhut; the king of Denmark), thirdly, a process involving: a. the recruitment of a body of people with the degree of commitment competence needed to live on someone else’s terms, together with the mental equipment for coping with the implications; b. a form of viable organisation that could mobilise committed people, maintain and supply them, and forge a link between them and their work and the wider church. Implying as well political and ecclesiastical conditions that allow innovation and flexibility; c. a sustained access to overseas locations, with the capacity to maintain communication over long periods, the “maritime consciousness, with maritime capability and logistical support” for at that time other means of transport did not exist ( A.Walls p.200;221).

The questions arises today whether piety that matches with ecumenism to add to a body of competent and committed persons, a viable organisation that links with the wider church, then a sustained access to means of international transport were available to provide a sustainable global missionary movement. Our survey of theological education institutions show the opposite. To envision the future, theological education agenda need to learn from history so to enhance ecumenism that will result in a visible unity of Christians and Christian communities.

## **4. “Engaging with History”**

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<sup>21</sup> He shows the role and impact of philosophies and philosophies of the time, the hugely needed support of the empire.

Learning history from the biblical anthropology perspective, history as categories of traditional systems and history as memory of imperial ideologies we suggest is an important process that will help African christianity to shape a well informed global mission agenda. Kenneth Ross<sup>22</sup> suggested three areas of concern for the theological education : engaging with history, with the other and with HIV/AIDS. With regard to engaging with history, Kenneth Ross put it as follows:

“The meeting between Christian faith and traditional culture takes place in a community moving through a particular history. The history of the Christian communities in Africa as they have responded to the times through which they have lived. It is precisely within the dynamic history of the encounter of African peoples with Christian faith, amidst social change, that African cultural identity can be properly understood in theological terms. The coming of Christ to a particular time and place does not act to render every other time and place of no account. The reverse is true. It serves to charge every location and every moment with the capacity to be the time and place where we meet with the God who comes near to us in Jesus Christ... as the attempt is made to ground Christian faith in the vernacular life of the communities...the referent is not only the indigenous language and culture of the Christian community but also the indigenous history. The particular history through which it has passed, the crises it has met and the response it has offered have acted to form a robust and well-defined identity. Theology rising from this history will not lack roots in real experience” ( K. Ross, 2002).

In Africa, history cannot be reduced to K. Ross's categories: traditional marriage systems, kinship, loyalties, rites de passage, social clubs, traditional medicine, oracle and festivals, great historical movements like globalisation or militarisation; nation-building, governance, food security and economic development. History in Africa is life and death, resistance, resilience and resurrection. The Africans must deals with the scars and the traumas of the denial of dignity and life they were imposed by humanity.

#### **4.1. Memory and Theology of Reconciliation**

Historian Joseph Ki-Zerbo wrote: “ unless there was a critical reading of the past by the intellectual and political elites, it will be impossible to understand the processes of economical, social, cultural and political degradation Africa knows today. Poverty in Africa is a historical process and its content followed clearly the status the continent was imposed from the slavery period to neo-colonial era”. From the political ideology angle. The hugely influential scholar Cheik Anta Diop<sup>23</sup>, contributed to the rehabilitation of African personality, history, culture and civilisation; his thesis on the Black identity of the Egyptian civilisation proved irrefutable. Nonetheless, the continent continued to be treated as pagan, primitive, with “inferior cultures” so that V.Y. Mudimbe, one

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<sup>22</sup> Rev. Dr Kenneth Ross is a former missionary teacher in Malawi, currently head of the Council for World Mission, Church of Scotland. Ross K; “ What Theological Education for Africa Today”? A Paper given at the Africa Forum Residential Meeting in Dunblane, Scotland 16-18 April 2002.

<sup>23</sup> A Senegalese born, nuclear physicist, historian and Egyptologist.

of the virulent critiques of western discourse on African societies, referred to the missionary enterprise as a “cultural propaganda with patriotic motivations and commercial interests, because the missionary program is in reality more complex than a simple transmission of Christian faith” ( Mudimbe, 1998:45).

From a biblical anthropology perspective Africa played a significant role in the history of redemption: Christian faith as it stands in the Bible, Old and New Testament, Noble says, has its roots, not only in Israel, but on the African land<sup>24</sup>. The sum up include the stories of Abraham in Egypt escaping the draught in Palestine to the tribe of Jacob reuniting and settling, to Moses who was born, grew up and was educated in Egypt; then Jesus and his holy family escaping from the genocide organised by Herod; Simon of Cyrene participating in the Calvary of Jesus or the Jerusalem event which had a large participation from Africa; then the rich and prosperous Christianity in North Africa and the first generation of missionaries and theologians who evangelised and conceptualised Christian theology; this rich history linking with the exuberant history of the Coptic Church in Egypt and Ethiopia, then to the 15<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese missionaries in Kongo and the vast missionary enterprise mostly undertaken by the former slaves in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

To recount such an extraordinary journey of Africa, African theologians ought to reconcile their traditions and the Western tradition and the Islamic, for as Mudimbe put it, the African human has the three in them. The history of humanity is a history of violence of the nations in which more often the church listened and fulfilled imperial mandate. Speaking about the fate of the indigenous populations of the Americas, an American congressman, Richard Wilde, said in 1830: “what is history if not the necrology of the Indians”.

The same question African scholars including Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Alphonse Quenum, Engelbert Mveng and others asked the Church and western Christianity with regard to its obvious role in the cynical and shameful Transatlantic Human trade of the Africans. Adoukonou says, beside the Black Trade, the Jewish Holocaust is like a drop in the ocean. Engelbert Mveng, systematically and persistently analysed what he called “anthropological annihilation” and “anthropological impoverishment of the African human” both by the Black trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. E. Mveng, while admiring the role some missionaries played in the propagation of the Gospel and the creation of services that changed the lives of many worldwide, questioned the alliance of the Churches with the dominant powers during colonial era and after ( Mveng: ). Mveng reminds that the man who is at the origin of the African tragedy, the Slaves Trade, Father Barthelemy de las Casas, is considered a Saint in the Western Christianity, a liberator of the Amerindians. Magesa rightly questions the attitude of the church whose catechism and liturgy, discourse and sermon and the celebration of the Eucharist never refer to these tragedies as if nothing happened in Africa. African societies were dismantled, dehumanised, disorganised to the highest degree yet, the church has never understood that it must be a collective memory, a political, social, cultural and religious conscience of the nations. To redeem herself as father Laurenti Magesa put it the church ought proceed to an exam of consciousness (Magesa:2002).

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<sup>24</sup> Noble, a 19<sup>th</sup> century book with a telling title, *The Redemption of Africa*.

The Transatlantic Blacks Trade, MacGregor and Noble said, extracted more than 100 millions Africans from their home base and more dramatic, 3 out of 4 died in the capture, the convoy, the parking in the assembling centres, the crossing of the oceans, the marking with hot metal, the mechanical treatment before the presentation on market for sell, the forced labour, or during the attempts to escape and revolts against the hard slavery conditions. From the conscience point of view, MacGregor wrote: "The church never succeed to eradicate the negative effects and the consequences of such a traffic cynical and ignominious, and we stand horrified, contemplating the sin that built the treasures on the agony and death of our kins" (MacGregor:26). Therefore, to repent for its complicity in the Jewish holocaust as did the Roman Catholic Church in France, but to omit to repent for its responsibility in the tragedies that dehumanised, destructed, and disorganised the African societies is hypocrisy, and a sin by voluntary omission.

As discussed above, many African scholars have questioned the capacity even the willingness of such a compromised church, deeply engaged in a monologue, to heal the scars (Eboussi Boulaga: Contretemps:144). Mongo Beti, a secular author, suggested that the church is an ally setting up strategies with the system to exploits the poor<sup>25</sup>.

#### **4.2. The anti- Black racism Impact on Mission**

Though from the point of view of the creation there is only one human race; and from the evolutionist perspective, all human species originate from a single animal specie, the race issue remain crucial to human relations. The Anti-Black racism was traced to the 18 and 19<sup>th</sup> century Neo-Darwinism. But why in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Church defended the cause of the Indians on the detriment of the Blacks is not clear? Darwin was drawn not simply by scientific zeal knowledge but a moral passion. His motive was hatred of the black slavery and the cruelties it sanctioned<sup>26</sup>.

A major shift regarding the image of Africa, according to Philip Curtin, took place with the publication in 1774 of The History of Jamaica where the authors attempted to explain that the humanity was not one but several

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<sup>25</sup> According to Mongo Beti, one of the most prolific African novelist, Christianity and its expression the church resembles the legend of the people of Saba. They always travel by couple but each at the distance of the other. The first person goes ahead sewing the seeds of misfortunes which then attacks the lives of the locals. Then later comes the second, taken by the pity of the miserable people tries to heal them, of course for pecuniary motives (Mongo Beti, 1956:201).

<sup>26</sup> On the Beagle voyage he had witnessed the mistreatment of slaves in South America and was revolted by it. He was haunted by the scream of a tortured slave he had overheard in Brazil. The Darwin's and Wedgwoods were all ardent abolitionists, and joined the family crusade. In the run-up the America civil war, scientists who sided with slaves owning South argued that the Blacks and Whites races were separated species; they would use one of Darwin's thesis that in the origin of species, breeds of dogs did not have a common ancestor". The racist scientists applied this to Blacks and Whites ( Adrian Desmond & Jonas Moore, Allan lane, Darwin's Sacred Cause: race, Slavery and the Quest for Human origins, 2008).

species incompatibles<sup>27</sup>. These theories were tempered by the Victorian period; people were treated not by “race” but by class. However, a minority of individuals – evangelicals and some enlightenment thinkers- who were committed to promote actions of tolerance and egalitarianism lost the ground under the pressure of intellectuals of the Anglophone world of the “Social-Darwinism” and the so-called “scientific racism”. Politics and science agreed on the fables from the schools of bishop Stubbs and Edward Freeman in Oxford, de Burgess in Columbia and Adams at Harvard defending the idea that civilisation was the work of the Saxons, Aryans or Teutonic race<sup>28</sup>. The consequences were prejudices and violence, denial of freedom and civil liberties, and genocides in Africa or America. In a virulent attack against the parliamentarians and anthropologists of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, he considered compromised, Pitt-Rivers wrote:

“This progressive movement is often led by men who have not made the races of mankind their study, they are perpetually falling into the error of supposing that the work of countless ages of divergence is to be put to rights by Acts of Parliament, and by suddenly applying to the inferior races of mankind laws and institutions for which they are about as fitted as the animals in the zoological gardens” (J. Pitt-Rivers, *The Evolution of Culture and other Essays*, London, 1906, quoted by Ross, 11).

The stigma on the basis of colour were internalised to the point it affected the psyche and spirituality of Black people and communities, bringing Manas Butherezi to describe the theological condition of the Black in a permanent questioning : “Why God created me Black” and african well known scholars affirm that no other society was dehumanised, desorganised, destructed as the African society (Blyden, L.S. Senghor, Mudimbe, Mveng).

Robert Knox in his book *The races of Man* by (1850) argued that the question of race was fundamental to the comprehension of the history and culture of the humanity. The ideas of Knox had a earthquake impact; he didn't apply them to the Africans but to the Irish and Scottish, Welsh, whom he said, would never change wherever they would settle; they won't understand what the Saxons call liberty. This positions dominated the anglophone world up to 1930s. In 1930 a distinguished professor of anthropology in the University of London, C.G. Seligman published a book with a same title and tune, “*The races of man*” in which he demonstrated the difference between the “races”

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<sup>27</sup> Andrew Ross on the influence of the neo-Darwinists on social sciences in 18&19<sup>th</sup> centuries Britain. The shift came with the neo-Darwinists who promoted the idea of the supremacy of the Saxon human, called to carry the “White man burden” over the rest of the world. These ideas were extended throughout the world, in Africa and Americas to justify the genocide committed against the local populations to appropriate their lands he said ( A. Ross, 1996.)

<sup>28</sup> Though there was no consensus on the definition of race, Knox had many disciples who now spread on the three continents (Europe, Africa and Americas). The Great-son of Huxley in an article of the *Spectator* (1924) wrote:

“You only have to go to a nigger camp-meeting to see the African mind in operation- the shrieks, the dancing and yelling and sweating, the surrender to the most violent emotion, the ecstatic blending of the soul of the Congo with the practice of the Salvation Army. So far, no very satisfactory psychological measure has been found for racial difference: that will come, but meanwhile the differences are patent” (Cit  par Malik, *The Meaning of Race*, 1996, pp.89-90).

of Caucasian origin and the others. He defended the idea that the “African hamites” were of Caucasian origin” and were “the civilising race of Africa” (Seligman: 214).

These ideas had devastating impact on the missionary movement, even on figures like Henry Venn who defended egalitarian ideas. In 1864, Henry Venn had succeeded to have Adjai Crowther crowned bishop, only to be sent in his native Yoruba land as a “missionary bishop”, having no diocesan bishop nor authority unto the white missionaries. Venn was being cautious. Adjai would be a full bishop of a self-administrative, self-supporting and self-expanding church if only things go well. After the death of H. Venn, Adjai ended where he started, victim of the supremacists, in the headquarters of the CMS on one side, and among the locals church workers who believed it was abnormal that one of them had an episcopal authority. Similar situation happened in many parts of Africa<sup>29</sup>.

### **Conclusions: Making the Pilgrimage together**

In concluding this reflection I would submit the following suggestions. First that African christianity has a very mandate to remind the people of Africa that they ought to totally turn their back to the tribulations of the past to engage in a process of building up a better future. Like Israel who were given a land of promise not on a golden plate but had to contribute to liberate it, the African people have to hope but also to invest efforts and intelligence in the “liberation” of their future.

Secondly, the biblical references set a charter of forgiveness and of reconciliation that every society, including the African should retain as a fundamental principle: the Bible teaches us that every event the people of Israel experienced, happy or unhappy meant they achieved the ideal ethical behaviour and the full development of the human being, called to be holy as God is holy (Lev 20:26); it was a history of constant renaissance Africa must learn even from its past.

Thirdly, What Africa is requesting from world Christianity is sitting together around the Lords’ table, to share the bread and cup of alliance for life so to draw a new mission agenda including making poverty and loneliness of its theological institutions history. That may be the prerequisite for African Christianity to engage in a new journey of a “reborn” Christianity in the West.

Fourthly, the African Christianity, to undertaking a cross-cultural global mission will have to recount the history of suffering of its people so to

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<sup>29</sup> In 1924 when the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa, Malawi was created by two Synods, the missionaries were authorised by the headquarters in Edinburgh, to keep a segregated Church with authority on committees and separated parishes. In Uganda it was common to meet a group of African chatting around a cup of coffee with a missionary in 1890s; in the 1930s, while secular White visitors were welcome in the residence of the missionaries, local pastors and evangelists were held at distance like “small boys” asking if *Bwana*, “Mister” was at home ( Ross, 24). At the same time when the Belgians wanted to introduce political reforms in Rwanda, it were the catholic missionaries who opposed them on the grounds of race supremacy theories.

apprehend the need for healing memories, rehabilitate dignity and the unity of the body of Christ, hence dismissing the idea that the coming of a “global Christianity” even from Africa is not a threat to the West. An agenda!

John Mbiti as reminded by Kwame Bediako:

“ Theologies from the new churches of the South have made this pilgrimages to the theological learning of the older churches of the North. We had no alternative.. we have eaten theology with you; we have drunk theology with you; we have dreamed theology with you... We know you theologically. The question is: do you know us theologically? Would you like to know us theologically”? ( Mbiti, 1974).

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