

# SINGING THE LORD'S SONGS IN A FOREIGN LAND"? MIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND RELIGION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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## **Abstract**

South Africa, like many other countries around the world experience continuous surges of immigrant populations in search of a better life (Harris 2006). Regional and internal country conflicts are a major sources of population displacement. Uneven development also contributes to migration across borders, a phenomenon that increases illegal labour mobility, creating potential tension between host nation citizens and immigrants, (Hakizimana 2002). A limited number of these migrants do integrate into the local communities where they become members but a majority remain on the margins of society and continue to connect and preserve their culture, citizenship and belonging with their countries of origin. This particularly affects their religion which is spread across the international borders as a result of migration and failure to integrate into the local churches. Migration and resettlements of African migrants has compelled them to challenging periods of adaptation, preservation and acculturation in their cross-border religion. Taking the example of three churches with African migrants, this article will illustrate the challenges of belonging, citizenship and religion confronting migrants in South Africa and how they resolve it by forming their own brand of protestant faith, which takes into account their unique experience of living in a foreign land. The analysis will focus on the role of Protestantism in determining and shaping the integration of migrants into the South African Society. It will conclude with outlining sinews of a theology of migration as articulated and practiced by members of these churches.