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**SECULARISM:**  
**A Pastoral Challenge Among the Contemporary African**  
**Youth**

**Supervisor**  
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**A Long Essay Submitted to the Department of Pastoral Theology in Partial**  
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## **DEDICATION**

**To Cottolengo family and to my parents, Mama *Cellah Okumu* and *Mzee Marcel Okumu*, and to all whom with their simple-daily lives try to seek the presence of God with the sincerity of their hearts**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Thirdly, I can't fail to acknowledge the Tangaza Library staff, who has also enormously assisted me during this research. I don't know what could have happened without their continuous assistance during my library use. This work could not have been successful without the library. I hope all those who use the library in this college (Tangaza) will continue to cherish our library and take good care of the materials therein for the following generations of Student.

Fourthly, I want to acknowledge in a special way, the people in Cottolengo communities in Nairobi; my fellow students, children, Sisters and our lay co-workers, who in one way or another, has helped me realize that there are many people who continuously search for the face of God in the daily moments of their lives. I want still to thank God for my Rector Rev. Fr. Emilio Gitonga, and Cottolengo superior's delegate, Rev. Fr. Giusto Cramerì, who apart from providing me with materials necessary for writing this paper, has been encouraging me always to pray and to study more, so that I can finally achieve some knowledge and live a life worthy of a Christian and of my call.

Since I cannot mention all by their names, I will sincerely ask our loving Mother Mary to pray for us all, so that in our daily lives, we can continue to seek for God with love and sincerity of our hearts.

**STUDENT’S DECLARATION**

**I hereby declare that this Long Essay (Thesis) is my original work achieved through personal readings, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master of Arts Degree in Theology {MTh}. It has never been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit. All sources have been acknowledged and cited in full.**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

G8 - The Group of Eight

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IMF - International Monetary Fund

UN - United Nations

UNEP - United Nation Environmental Programme

US – United States (of America)

WTO - World Trade Organizations

## General Introduction

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“*Africans are notoriously religious.*”<sup>1</sup> These were the words of Professor John S. Mbiti in his celebrated book, “*African Religions and Philosophy*”, the book which was first published in 1969 and its first edition reprinted thirteen times. But the question is: *As we talk today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, can we still affirm this idea that Africans are notoriously religious as professor Mbiti claimed it to be?* We are living in a different reality and a different cultural context where values and ideologies are being borrowed and shared, and the claim that *Africans are notoriously religious* seems to be losing ground in Africa due to the wave of *secularism* that probably began in the west, and is hovering all over the world. African traditional religiosity seems to have been overtaken by modern secularism. So, in spite of the Mbiti’s claim that Africans are notoriously religious, we have to affirm on the contrary that secularism is spreading fast in Africa, especially among the African youth, mostly in our African towns and cities.

Secularism is a reality that is taking roots among the masses in Africa, especially among the African youth. This also seem to be against the common belief that Africa and secular values and ideologies are non-concomitant notions, just as professor Mbiti tried to extol in his book *African Religions and Philosophy*. Even though towards the end of this book, Mbiti mentioned that Africa is caught up in a world revolution which affects all the spheres of life,<sup>2</sup> and here we might deduce that religious aspect is also part of this revolution, probably from being ‘*notoriously religious*’, to secular, or probably on the extreme, to atheistic beliefs. But professor Mbiti himself never explicitly mentioned anything like that in his book, so we are just left alone to make some intelligent guesses.

The reason for my great concern on the African youth is because of the fact that, youth-stage is a transitional stage, a stage from childhood to adulthood. There is a

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<sup>1</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI., *African Religions and Philosophy*, 213.

common saying that *the youth are the future leaders*, or in other words, *the leaders of tomorrow*. Youth-stage is the time when the young people have a lot of energy and potentials, and the ideas that they hold at this stage in life are likely to accompany them and affect their entire lives. So when we look at the young people today, we can predict the type of the society that we will be having tomorrow. If secularism is spreading among the African youth today, then the future of our society will be likely to be *secularistic*, and the good religious beliefs and morals which we have held in Africa for years will just be a history to tell.

I have realised that very few people have attempted doing research on areas related the topic of my research, "*Secularism as a Pastoral Challenge Among the Contemporary African Youth*". I have to admit that after doing extensive search, I found only one research-work done at bachelor's level entitled "*Secularism in Africa*", but I have failed to lay my hands at any work done either at Master's level or beyond that relate to the topic of my research (Secularism: A Pastoral Challenge Among the Contemporary African Youth). Probably my work will serve as a proper foundation for those who would wish to do an extensive research-work on the same field in future.

I think that the limited number of the research-works done in the field of secularism in Africa can be attributed to the belief advocated by professor Mbiti that Africans are notoriously religious. The truth on the ground on the other hand indicates that the African society is steadily turning from being religious as many think, to secular and to secularism, and that reality in itself has compelled me to do my research on this field despite the fact that very few people have done extensive academic research-works on the same (this topic).

I will therefore start my research based on two works explicitly done on this topic in Africa. One of these two works was conducted by *Daystar University College* in 1988 and it was entitled, *The Nairobi Church Survey*. It was trying to investigate the relationship between the laxity in Church commitment and secularism. How laxity in Church commitment can lead to secularism especially among the young people.

The second work was done by Father A. Shorter and Edwin Onyancha, who took as their background the findings of the research done by *Daystar University College* in 1988 as mentioned above, and they developed the findings of research done by Daystar University College to be authentically theirs. Their study was entitled, *Secularism in Africa; a Case Study of Nairobi City*. I was inspired by these two works done on this topic in the African soil and therefore I too decided to study the same topic and see how Africa, which was previously viewed as deeply religious, is being affected by the reality of secularism. This thesis therefore finds its basis in these two works which were done by different scholars at different times within the African continent.

I will also rely on various scholarly articles and works treating the general realities of the young people in the African continent, works that will try to show that the young people in Africa are not notoriously religious as many tend to believe.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to explore how pastoral agents of Christianity in the contemporary African society can counteract the reality of secularism among the youth. In other words, how the Church in Africa can preach Christ to the youth in this context of secularistic society.

This paper will be in four chapters: a) the first chapter will treat *the General Understanding of the Phenomena of Secularism*, b) the second chapter will look at *the Reality of Secularism Among the Youth in the Contemporary African Society*, c) chapter three will look at the *Agents of Secularism in the Contemporary African Society*, and finally d) Chapter four will look at *the Evangelization Strategies Among the Youth in the Contemporary African Society*. I will look on how secularism is affecting the young people in areas like faith and church commitments, family values and ties, morality etc.

It would have been a good idea to go to the field and do an empirical research on this issue, but taking into consideration the time limit and the cost that might be involved; I decided not to do that at this time; probably that will be reserved for another research in the future. I will therefore rely heavily on different articles and works, however minimal, which have been conducted in this field, and I will give inputs and criticisms and finally make a general synthesis from the different sources used.

# Chapter I

## 1. Understanding the Phenomena of Secularism

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### Introduction

Secularism is a reality that is taking roots among the masses in Africa, especially among the African youth. This seems to be against the common belief that Africa and secular values and ideologies are non-concomitant notions.

In this chapter, I want to deal with the general understanding and phenomena of secularism. I have started with the exploration of the following concepts, a) Secular, and b) secularization, before looking at *secularism*. These three terms, secular, secularization and secularism, are somehow related, and therefore I shall deal with them prior to everything for a proper and comprehensive foundation and understanding of this work.

As an ideology or practical belief, the word secularism, even though of recent origin, gets its basic tenets from the previous schools of thoughts, which contribute to what it is, as was first used by English writer, *George Jacob Holyoake*.<sup>3</sup>

After the exploration of the terms, secular, secularization and secularism, we shall look at the brief historical development of secularism, before looking at the popular assumptions in regard to secularism, namely, a) secularism as human progress, b) secularism as unbelief, and c) secularism as consumer materialism.

Finally, we shall briefly give a concluding remark of the chapter. This chapter therefore acts as a part of the foundation for this paper.

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<sup>3</sup> *George Jacob Holyoake* was a British writer, born at *Birmingham* on April 13<sup>th</sup> 1817 and died at *Brighton* on 22 of January 1906. He lectured and wrote articles advocating for socialism and cooperation, and founded magazine called the *Oracle*, which was succeeded by the *Movement* in 1846 and the *Reasoner* in 1846. Cf. K. KNIGHT, 'Secularism' in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

## 1.1. Secularism

Secularism is a reality that is presently with us in Africa, a reality that we cannot deny. It's affecting our youth, and if not dealt with, it will soon start to affect the entire African society, and the good religious values that we have held for centuries will just be a history to tell. It's a progressing reality and for us to better understand it, we need to understand it from the perspective of the word *secular*, to *secularization* before we look at the real phenomena of *secularism* as we are yet to do here below.

### 1.1.1. From Secular to Secularization

The term '*Secularism*' is derived from English word '*Secular*', which etymologically comes from Latin word '*Saecularis*', and simply means, the world or that which pertains to the world, especially as opposed to the Church. The word secular therefore can be said to refer to things that belongs to this world and its affairs as opposed to things that pertains to the Church and to religion. It is normally associated with issues like, a) civil affairs, b) the affairs of the lay-men and women in their daily lives as opposed to the consecrated and to the clergy, and c) temporal or worldly affairs. In this sense, the word secular can still be used to refer to things which are associated with, a) non-ecclesiastical affairs, b) non-religious affairs, and c) things considered profane or non-sacred.<sup>4</sup>

One thing to note at the onset of this paper is that, things sacred and things secular are not opposed to each other. Secular and sacred represent two different ways of experiencing, understanding or encountering the same reality. They in themselves are not opposed to each other, in competition or conflict.<sup>5</sup> "At the sacred level, reality is experienced as being under the governance of God, as the object of religious faith. The secular on the other hand, is the same reality construed as being accessible to humanity and under its control."<sup>6</sup> We can therefore affirm that secular has nothing to do with the concept of 'uncleanness' and it is not intrinsically opposed to the sacred reality. One

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. L. WILLIAM, - *al.*, "Secularism" in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1828.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa," 10.

<sup>6</sup> A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 10.

complements the other and the other helps in grasping the inner component of the other.<sup>7</sup> The sacred and the secular, each in its own merit has its own autonomy, but each of them complements and helps in understanding the other. However, cultural set-ups or human societies which are not technologically sophisticated, in most cases tend to allow the sacred to invade the secular arena or sphere, and thus interfere and discourage human initiative and innovation.<sup>8</sup>

Professor Mbiti, in his renowned book, '*African Religions and Philosophy*', tried to manifest the traditional African set-up in this context where the separation of the sacred and the secular is not clearly visible. He states:

Because traditional religions permeate all the departments of life, there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it to the field where he is sowing seeds or harvesting new crops; he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician, he takes it to the house of parliament. Although many African languages do not have a word for religion as such, it nevertheless accompanies individual from long before his birth to long after his physical death.<sup>9</sup>

In such situations as indicated above, where sacred and secular has no clear separate territory, and especially if it happens in our modern times, one has to give the way to the other so that each of them can gain its autonomy, and normally it is the secular which overtakes the sacred. Secular has to get out and use the power of its rationality to leave the sacred on its own. Secular therefore tries to explain everything through this power of rationality.<sup>10</sup>

To give an example, while one may talk of sacred illness e.g., *morbus sacer* as was in the past, meaning that what was sacred was amalgamated with secular, today the psychologists and psychiatrics consider the same phenomena, [*morbus sacer*], and carry out their dispassionate analysis. The field of such illness is no-longer that of exorcism

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 10.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 10.

<sup>9</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> I have to affirm against the argument of professor Mbiti, that such type of thinking, where sacred and secular co-habit, no-longer exist among the African people, especially among the contemporary African youth. What I am trying to say is that African youth are no-longer notoriously religious as professor Mbiti claimed it to be.

and magic, which is in the field of sacred, but one of analysis, drugs and surgery, which is in the secular field.<sup>11</sup> Most often, today secular is separated from sacred, not in the manner of opposition or conflict, but in complementary and for wider understanding.

As we talk today, we are living in a world which we call post-modern era, and this post-modern era has led to what we call secularization, that is the clear separation of the sacred and the secular. To be modern means, for example, “the enlargement of human freedom and the enhancement of the range of choices open to a people in respect to things that matter, including their present and future lifestyles. This means, being in-charge of oneself. [This] ... is one of the connotations of the process of secularisation.”<sup>12</sup>

In the modern context where sacred often invades secular spheres and in most cases discourage human initiative and innovation has led to what we call *secularisation*. In situations where sacred invades the secular, the two [sacred and secular] are not seen as two different ways of experiencing the same reality, but they [sacred and secular] are viewed as the same reality. In such cases, the sacred often times seem to overpower the secular and everything secular according to this situation needs to be interpreted in the light of the sacred. It’s here that secular tend to lose its autonomy. As such, a strong restoration of the secular has to take place for it to get freedom from the sacred, and thus there is a rise of secularisation. Secularisation is therefore a clear separation of the two [sacred and secular]. Secularisation thus affirms that “humanity had now come of age, and that religious faith had nothing to fear from the realisation of secular potentials [...]”<sup>13</sup>

### **1.1.2. From Secularization to Secularism**

The word secularisation “was first used in 1648 at the end of the thirty years war in Europe to refer to the transfer of church properties to the exclusive control of the princes.”<sup>14</sup> That was at first a matter of fact statement but later on, after the French

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. B. HARING, *Faith and Morality in Secular Age*, 24.

<sup>12</sup> T. N. MADAN, “Secularism in its Place”, 749.

<sup>13</sup> A. SHORTER, “Secularism in Africa”, 10.

<sup>14</sup> T. N. MADAN, “Secularism in its Place”, 748.

Revolution became a value statement as well. On November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1789, *Talleyrand*<sup>15</sup> announced to the national assembly of France that all ecclesiastical goods were at the disposal of the nation. The notion of secularisation was built into ideology of progress and even though fragmentary and sometimes looks as incomplete process; it has ever since retained a positive connotation.<sup>16</sup>

Secularisation<sup>17</sup> is “generally employed to refer to ...the process by which sectors of society and cultures are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols.”<sup>18</sup>

In modern connotation, secularisation refers to, “[a] ... the process of differentiation between religious and non-religious institutions... [b] the privatisation of religion, that is, its removal from public sphere... and [c] the decline of the importance of religious meaning in individuals’ lives.”<sup>19</sup> Secularisation is therefore a process in which there is a change in human thought and action. To the extreme, it asserts that the world has reached adulthood and therefore no-longer needs the working hypothesis of God to

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<sup>15</sup> *Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord* was the Prince of Benevento, Bishop of Autun, French minister and ambassador, born in Paris, 13 February, 1754, died there, May, 1838. The eldest of an ancient French family, he was destined for Holy orders, owing to an accident which had made him lame. After having completed his studies at the Collège d'Harcourt, he went to St-Sulpice and, against his inclination, became an *abbé*. He then read the "most revolutionary books", and at length, giving up his priestly life, plunged into the licentiousness of the period. Having, nevertheless, been ordained priest (1779) and appointed general agent of the clergy (1780) he rapidly acquired a reputation as a man of ability. The Assembly of the Clergy of France of 1782 appointed him their promoter, and in 1785 he became secretary. Owing to his notorious immorality he obtained an episcopal see only through a promise wrung from the dying king by his father, Comte Daniel de Talleyrand. Consecrated on 16 January, 1789, and promoted to the Bishopric of Autun, he appeared in his diocese only to be elected a member of the "Etats Généraux". He soon became one of the most important personages in Europe, and utilized every opportunity to advance his private interests. Cf. *Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord*, in New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14434b.htm>, (22-07-2011)

<sup>16</sup> Cf. T. N. MADAN, “Secularism in its Place”, 748.

<sup>17</sup> Secularization can still have the following connotations which I do not intend to use in this paper: a) the process whereby a member of religious institute or society of devout life is separated from the institute or society. This can happen in three ways; by expiration of temporary vows, voluntary departure and involuntary dismissal. b) Secularization is also often used to refer to the process in which church owned institutions such as schools and hospitals are transferred to secular or civil ownership. This probably gets its connotation from the origin of the term, where the church properties were transferred to the exclusive control of the princes. Cf. STRAVINSKAS, M. J. ed., “Secularization” in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 875.

<sup>18</sup> T. N. MADAN, “Secularism in its Place”, 748.

<sup>19</sup> D. P. PEYNE – J. M. KENT, *an Alliance of the Sacred*, 42.

make some sense or reality in solving the problems of mankind.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, it also affirms that it's not enough for the contemporary man to be told theoretically that faith in God can produce a source of human authenticity and true brotherhood.

By the fact that secularisation does not exclude the acceptance of God's kingdom, it only demands that the Church and Ecclesiastical authorities must present and incarnate religious doctrines and dogmas in such a way that do not curtail the just autonomy of earthly realities, and the freedom and dignity of people.<sup>21</sup>

Secularisation therefore involves itself with the process in which there is a break with the cultural traditions in which ethics, politics and philosophy were all *theocentric*, culture identical with that of medieval Christendom. With secularisation, the culture is anthropocentric and it involves itself with realities which are contingent, intrinsically, singular and concrete.<sup>22</sup>

It's clear that "while the inner logic of the economic sector [might] perhaps makes it [secularization] the most notable, the political, have been found to be less amenable to it."<sup>23</sup> "Unfortunately, secularisation possesses a momentum of its own, and very soon develops into *secularism*, the situation in which the secular is observed to dominate or even replace the sacred."<sup>24</sup>

Secularism can therefore be said to rest on the notion that "religion is an erroneous view of cosmos that will yield to more rational understanding as scientific thinking and economic growth advance."<sup>25</sup> In simple terms, we can say that secularism is an ideology that looks for the decline of religion in modern world.<sup>26</sup> "Secularism refers to a situation in which religious faith, for one reason or another is felt to be superfluous. It's a state in which organised religions loses its hold both at the level of social institution and

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. N. LOSSKY, et.al, "Secularization" in *the Dictionary of Ecumenical movements*, 1032.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. B. HARING, *Faith and Morality in Secular Age*, 39

<sup>22</sup> Cf. R. LATOURELLE – R. FISICHELLA., ed., "Secularization and Secularism" in *the Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 972.

<sup>23</sup> T. N. MADAN, "Secularism in its Place", 748.

<sup>24</sup> A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 10 - 11.

<sup>25</sup> T. N. MADAN, "Secularism in its Place", 747.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. D. P. PEYNE – J. M. KENT, *an Alliance of the Sacred*, 42.

at the level of human consciousness.”<sup>27</sup> It’s therefore a datum and a world view of modern society, which in theory or practice denies the immanence of God.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.1.3. From Secularism to Atheism

Secularism in our African context can be equated to *indifferentism* or *practical atheism*. In these contexts, many people no-longer bother or care whether there is Almighty God or not, a situation which can be compared to what was foretold by the prophet of atheism, Friedrich Nietzsche, in his allegory of the madman.<sup>29</sup> Nietzsche states:

The madman: - Have you not heard of the madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: “I seek God! I seek God!” As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. “Has he got lost?” asked one. “Did he lose his way like a child?” asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? Emigrated? Thus they yelled and laughed.

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. “Whither is God?” he cried; “I will tell you. We have killed him – you and I, all of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth away from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as though an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lantern in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? God, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.

“How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festival of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatest of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a great deed; and whoever is born after us – for the sake of this deed, he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto.”<sup>30</sup>

Nietzsche intended to refer to those who go about their daily affairs without acknowledging the existence of God. They live, as Nietzsche said, as if God do not exist. Considering this situation as referred to by Nietzsche, we can say that “there is secularism only when there is present, either on the theoretical or practical level, an

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<sup>27</sup> A. SHORTER, “Secularism in Africa”, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER., “Secularism in Africa”, 11.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. I. KLINGER – C. RIMIRU, *Philosophy, Science and God*, 95.

<sup>30</sup> F. NIETZSCHE, *The Gay Science, translated*. 181.

explicit negation or neglect of man's ultimate dependence on God."<sup>31</sup> Man therefore in this situation affirms his autonomy and proclaims that he can live without God.

The supporters of secularism "lauds man so extravagantly that their faith in God lapses into a kind of anaemia, though they seem more inclined to affirm man than to deny God."<sup>32</sup> This should not be confused with atheism, even though it can clearly act as a step towards that. This is because, secularism do not explicitly deny the existence of God. What it does is that, it does not give it much consideration in its formulations.

But care should be taken "not to accuse of either atheism or secularism those political parties and socio-cultural associations which delimit their own programmes and tasks to concrete political or socio-cultural problems, without taking a stance or associating themselves with any religion or ideology."<sup>33</sup> These political parties or socio-cultural associations cannot be called either atheistic or secularistic by the very fact that these ideologies depends most often on the attitude of individual(s) rather than the secularity of political or economic life. We must also take into consideration the historical evolution of different political parties and such organisations. The only thing is that, once they are anti-Christ, anti-Church or anti-religious, they eventually become atheistic, or still quasi-atheistic or agnostic, but still these organisations can evolve in a pragmatic, political character, completely detaching themselves of ideologies which are quasi-religious or anti-religious.<sup>34</sup>

As a doctrine, "secularism is usually used to describe any philosophy which forms its ethics without reference to religious dogmas and which promote the development of human, art and science."<sup>35</sup> It can be a philosophy of life in a practical sense, or it can be theoretical in a well-established theories and dogmas that prove its authenticity.

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<sup>31</sup> B. HARING, *Faith and Morality in Secular Age*, 32.

<sup>32</sup> B. HARING, *Faith and Morality in Secular Age*, 32.

<sup>33</sup> B. HARING, *Faith and Morality in Secular Age*, 32 - 33.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. B. HARING, *Faith and Morality in Secular Age*, 33.

<sup>35</sup> "Secularism" in *About.com* 1, Secularism cannot therefore be equated to religion even in its theoretical senses and formulations; this is because, it first and foremost removes God and religious beliefs and doctrines from its hypothesis, but it does not deny the existence of God. It's therefore true to affirm that "calling secularism a religion should be instantly recognized as oxymoron, analogous to claiming that bachelors can be married. By the fact that religion puts God

Those who hold a secularistic view maintains that culture, politics and economics must at all the times receive most of the human energy and resources, and they further hold that devoting a lot of our energy and resources to the religious goals is not only wasteful but also immoral.<sup>36</sup>

Secularism can stem from “explicit unbelief, the denial of the existence of God or of any religious dimension to human life. Such unbelief is rarely the product of a formal, atheistic rational philosophy.”<sup>37</sup> We find that in most cases, “it is an allegiance to popular myth of science as the ultimate theory of everything, a conviction that the only truths are those which are accessible to scientific observation and experiments. Basically, it’s a faith in unlimited human progress.”<sup>38</sup>

Secularism in practice is therefore the worship of that which is not God. It therefore “banishes religious belief to the private sphere of subjective opinion and elevates popular science alone to the level of public truth.”<sup>39</sup>

Consumer materialism is one of the aspects which are nowadays considered as the main causes of secularism. Here human beings are preoccupied with material things to the extent that they forget about the creator. The issue of consumer materialism will be treated in details towards the end of this chapter, but before that, I feel it’s appropriate to look at the brief history of secularism.

## 1.2. Brief History of Secularism

The term *secularism* was first used by British writer, *George Jacob Holyoake* about 1846, in association with his great companion *Charles Bradlaugh*,<sup>40</sup> to denote a

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or Supreme Being at its center, makes secularism something else rather than religion, because it removes God who is the very center and core of religion and puts him [God] in the periphery. Cf. “Secularism” in *About.com*, 1.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. M. J. STRAVINSKAS, ed., “Secularization” in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 876.

<sup>37</sup> A. SHORTER, “Secularism in Africa”, 11.

<sup>38</sup> A. SHORTER, “Secularism in Africa”, 11.

<sup>39</sup> A. SHORTER, “Secularism in Africa”, 11.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Bradlaugh was born at Hoxton – London on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1833, and died on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1891. He was a zealous Sunday school teacher in Church of England, and was later denounced as atheist by Rev. Pecker who was the minister there then. From 1853 till 1868, he wrote a great number of articles under the pseudonym ‘*Iconoclast*’ gave many lectures and held many public debates. He was elected by Northampton as a member of the House of Commons in

form of opinion which concern itself with the questions and issues of which can be sorted with the experience of this life.<sup>41</sup>

They held that secularism is “a code of duty pertaining to this life founded on consideration purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable.”<sup>42</sup> They believed that secularism would seek the physical, moral and intellectual development of man to the higher possible point, as the immediate duty of life, which advocates for the practical sufficiency of natural morality, apart from Atheism, Theism or the Bible, and it selects its method of procedure through promotion of human improvement by material means, through the use of reason and ennobled by service.<sup>43</sup>

Even though the term *secularism* in itself is of recent origin, its various doctrines has been the talk of free-thinkers of all ages, and in-fact, secularism in itself is only an extension of free-thought, claiming that any serious opinion or thought should be based on the basis of reason, logic or science, apart from authority, tradition, religion or dogmas.<sup>44</sup>

Some still claim that secularism extends to the Biblical times of Jesus, when He (Jesus) mentioned that “*well then, pay Caesar what belong to Caesar and God what belongs to God*” (Luke. 20:25), denoting the separation of the civil affairs from the religious affairs.

Early secular ideas involving the separation of philosophy and religion can be traced back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century with *Ibn Rushd* (1126-1198), (commonly known in the

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1880. He refused to take the required oath and was not allowed to sit in the house. He was re-elected the following year, consented to take the oath, but this was refused on account of his atheism. Finally in 1886, the new speaker allowed him to take the oath and sit in parliament. He succeeded Holyoake as president of London Secular Society and in 1866, he enlarged the scope of this Society Association by founding the *National Secular Society* over which he presided until 1990 when he was succeeded by Mr. G. W. Foot., Cf. K. KNIGHT, ‘Secularism’ in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

<sup>42</sup> K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

European literature as Averroes) and the Averroism school of philosophy.<sup>45</sup> He advocated that even though there is no conflict between Religion and philosophy, these two different schools of thought can be used to arrive at the same reality. They in themselves (philosophy, theology) are distinct and separate ways of arriving at the same reality. The point of Averroes concerning philosophy and theology is called double Truth Theory.<sup>46</sup>

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) on his part argued that there is no contradiction between faith and reason. “Aquinas sees philosophy and theology in harmonious terms, although the scope of theology is more universal and broader than of any other sciences.”<sup>47</sup> He argued that a theologian can use other disciplines like philosophy to illustrate some theological points, just the way a philosopher can use arguments of other disciplines like physics to make some philosophical points.<sup>48</sup>

Bonaventure (1221-1274) on the other hand, set out to abolish the separation of faith and reason, but at the long run, he ended up to a stance of un-intentional separation of faith and reason. He only affirmed the very thing in which he wanted to abolish. He started by stating that “philosophy has to subject itself to theology if it wants to flourish. And independent philosophy will result into error.”<sup>49</sup> “Bonaventure’s stance, reinforced by other Franciscans after him resulted into separation of faith and reason, Theology and philosophy - although its explicit goal is for the opposite, that is, to draw philosophy into the ambit of grace and theology.”<sup>50</sup>

The epoch that accelerated the secularistic ideas was the period of *enlightenment*, sometimes referred to as the *Age of Reason* or the *Age of Rationalism*. This period began around 1600’s and lasted until 1700’s, and all of the great thinkers of this period accepted the idea of one of the great English philosophers, Francis Bacon, that ‘knowledge is

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. “Secularism” in *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. R. V. NIEUWENHAVE, “The Catholic Theology in the Thirteenth Century and the Origin of Secularism”, 340.

<sup>47</sup> R. V. NIEUWENHAVE, “The Catholic Theology in the Thirteenth Century and the Origin of Secularism”, 342.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. R. V. NIEUWENHAVE, “The Catholic Theology in the Thirteenth Century and the Origin of Secularism”, 342.

<sup>49</sup> R. V. NIEUWENHAVE, “The Catholic Theology in the Thirteenth Century and the Origin of Secularism”, 343.

<sup>50</sup> R. V. NIEUWENHAVE, “The Catholic Theology in the Thirteenth Century and the Origin of Secularism”, 350.

power. The main preoccupations of this era were the critical examination of the previously accepted principles and authorities, whether in politics, religion or science. The important sources of 'enlightened' ideas include British empiricism and liberalism (particularly the thought of Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and Newton), French humanism, rationalism and scepticism (Rabelais, Montaigne, Descartes and Bayle) and to a degree, the ideas of Spinoza and Leibniz. The main ideas advocated for during this period can be reduced to constitutionalism and efficiency in government; experimentalism in science; deism, rationalism or scepticism in religion, and utilitarianism in ethics. There was a widespread and optimism in belief in secular progress.<sup>51</sup>

The thinkers of this period strongly believed that the universe is composed of mathematical characters, and therefore can be understood through human intellect. Failure to understand the cosmos therefore causes all forms of evil, and comes from man's ignorance or neglect of natural laws mainly caused by prejudice and superstition, and fostered deliberately in the interest of kings, priests, nobles and other beneficiaries of the traditional order.<sup>52</sup>

The greatest thinkers of this period exalted the human reason, and "... they blamed people in authority, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, for keeping others in ignorance to maintain their own personal power."<sup>53</sup>

The period produced many important advances in such fields as anatomy, astronomy, chemistry, mathematics and physics. Nature was seen as vast and complex, but ordered. Philosophers of this time did not deny the fact that the universe was created by God, but they maintained that after being created, God left it alone to itself. They negated the possibility of miracles or any other special intervention of God. This mode of thinking is called *Deism*. According to them, God regulated nature so that it proceeds mechanically. Future events are therefore fully predictable on the basis of earlier events.<sup>54</sup> This period saw, the re-birth of Greco-Roman culture, the revival of an independent spirit of learning, the renewal of interest in humanities, and with the downfall of scholasticism,

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. R. H. BOWEN, "Enlightenment" in *Encyclopedia International*, 484.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. R. H. BOWEN, "Enlightenment" in *Encyclopedia International*, 484.

<sup>53</sup> J. CREECH, "Age of Reason" in *World Book Encyclopedia*, 139.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. J. CREECH, "Age of Reason" in *World Book Encyclopedia*, 139-140.

the termination of the subservience of philosophy to theology and to the authority of the Church. Indeed it's during this time that, philosophy developed itself in a natural progression that was free from the yoke of ecclesiastical authority and dogmatism.<sup>55</sup>

There is no doubt that the proponents of secularism must have been influenced by the mode of thinking found during the enlightenment period.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, George Jacob Holyoake, who can be rightly called *the father of secularism*, took the task upon himself to codify secularism as a well framed dogma. He maintained that:

Secularism is not an argument against Christianity; it is one independent of it. It does not question the pretensions of Christianity; it advances others. Secularism does not say that there is no light or guidance elsewhere, but maintains, that there is light and guidance in secular truth, whose conditions and sanctions exist independently and act forever. Secular knowledge is manifestly that kind of knowledge which is founded in this life, which relates to the conduct of this life, conduces to the welfare of this life, and is capable of being tested by the experience of this life.<sup>56</sup>

It's un-doubtable that secularism can easily lead to atheism, and *Bradlaugh* himself stated that "although at present it may be perfectly true that all men who are secularists are not atheists, I put it that in my opinion the logical consequences of the acceptance of secularism must be that the man gets to atheism if he has brains enough to comprehend."<sup>57</sup>

Secularism according to Holyoake has three essential principles; a) the improvement of this earthly life through material means, b) science is therefore available providence of man, c) it's therefore good to be good and to do good. Even if there are other goods or not, according to secularism, the good of this present life is good and therefore it is good to seek that good.<sup>58</sup>

Recently, Pope John II in his encyclical letter, *Faith and Reason (Fides et Ratio)*, asserted that "faith and reason are like two wings in which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth, and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy*, 119.

<sup>56</sup> K. KNIGHT, "Secularism" in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

<sup>57</sup> K. KNIGHT, "Secularism" in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. K. KNIGHT, "Secularism" in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

- in a word, to know himself so that, by loving and knowing God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.”<sup>59</sup> So according to him philosophy and theology, or faith and reason should be seen together for the arrival to the divine truth.

### **1.3. Popular Assumptions in Regard to Secularism**

Let us therefore briefly look at some popular assumptions in regard to secularism. This will give us a clear picture as we try to understand the secularistic aspects and beliefs among the contemporary African youth.

#### **1.3.1. Human progress**

The most important myth that has led to the rise of secularism in our contemporary African society is the myth of human progress. Many people in African society today claim that secularism is the inevitable and final condition of our modern human life; this is due to advances in science and technology which are gaining momentum in our contemporary African society.<sup>60</sup> “It is popularly assumed that religion belongs to the childhood of humanity and that primitive people are naively pious, credulous and subject to the teachings of priests and magicians.”<sup>61</sup>

The progress of science and technology, finding its roots in enlightenment period, propose that human beings must throw away the shackles of religion, in order for them to be truly human. Such types of thinking are based on the evolutionary theories of society.<sup>62</sup>

#### **1.3.2. Secularism and Unbelief**

The Vatican colloquium of August 1972 identified secularism in Africa, to be taking the form of unbelief among intellectuals and *elites* in universities and higher institutions of learning. There is a claim that unbelief is on the rise especially among the

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<sup>59</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, pre-introductory note.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 16.

<sup>61</sup> A. SHORTER, “Secularism in Africa”, 11.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 17.

educated, and it is also in the increase among the semi-educated, and this is due to the fact that religious education – in schools, colleges and universities has failed to keep pace with secular academic education.<sup>63</sup> It's being said in Africa that, "Church leaders saw universities and other institutes of third level education as places that posed a danger to the faith of young elites."<sup>64</sup> It states:

Analysis of unbelief among the academic community is certainly not far from the truth. African universities are part of secular tradition of higher learning that stems from the enlightenment and from parent universities in Europe. Religious authorities were seen as repressive and opposed to true academic freedom. Such freedom demanded an open mind, an agnosticism or methodical doubt. In matters of religious belief, honesty was thought to consist in coming to no conclusion. This was conceived to be 'rational' and 'objective' since religion was deemed to be subjective and scientifically untrustworthy.<sup>65</sup>

*Aylward Shorter* in his article "Secularism in Africa" noted that the first generation of African university students was taught to scoff at or reject organized religion and at religious authority. Scholarly researches show that African intellectuals prided themselves on their unbelief; and African undergraduates were quick to disapprove the existence of God as soon as they joined the universities.<sup>66</sup>

The Church authorities have tried to fight this issue of unbelief in the institutes of higher learning, by introducing; a) competent adult catechesis, b) spiritual guidance and pastoral care to the university students and to other students of institutes of higher learning, c) bringing the religious education in the universities at par with secular education.<sup>67</sup>

This has worked well to reduce unbelief among the university graduates. "However, the emphasis of secularism has now shifted from unbelief to religious indifferentism caused by consumer materialism."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa," 11-12.

<sup>64</sup> A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 12.

<sup>65</sup> A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 12.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 12.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 13.

<sup>68</sup> A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 12.

### 1.3.3. Secularism and Consumer Materialism

Materialism as an ideology asserts that every reality that exists is material, and besides the material reality, there is nothing that does exist. That means, there is no God, no soul, no spiritual reality, only matter exist.<sup>69</sup> In its philosophical connotation, it asserts that human being is purely material being, and all the aspects of the human such as beliefs, thoughts, desires, sensations and other mental states, are all properties of material system and therefore can be explained through scientific laws.<sup>70</sup>

Consumer materialism is a form of secularism that is rapidly appearing in Africa, and it comes as a result of rapid technological change, and linked with wealth creation, because the wealthy are the principal consumers. First and foremost, it's being triggered by 'economism'.<sup>71</sup> Economism is "The popular scientific myth [which] views economics as a science, an explanation that is strictly and objectively true, a science that can change the world."<sup>72</sup> Market is seen as the root symbol of economism, and the world in its entirety is seen as interlinked markets.

Markets are characteristically held to be 'free' and 'just' if left to operate according to their own impersonal laws. The truth is that markets are never free or just. They do nothing by themselves, but are static, until manipulated by human beings. This neo-liberal market ideology is, in-fact rooted in individualism or the logic of self-interest, popularly equated with rationality itself. Success is calculated in terms of economic growth, not in the equitable sharing of wealth. While countries grow richer, their poorer citizens become more numerous.<sup>73</sup>

The African youth are faced with the desire to be independent and capable of economic self-sustenance, and therefore anything that tends to be spiritual is side-lined for economic gains. The traditional solidarity in which the individual says, "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am, is constantly being smashed, undermined and in some respect destroyed."<sup>74</sup> What remain are 'I' and 'my own survival'. The traditional set-up where society dictated the religious set-up is long gone and individuals remain only for themselves to survive.

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<sup>69</sup> I. KLINGER – C. RIMIRU, *Philosophy, Science and God*, 118.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. M. D. WILSON, "Materialism" in *World Book Encyclopedia*, 300a.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 13

<sup>72</sup> A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 14.

<sup>73</sup> A. SHORTER, "Secularism in Africa", 14

<sup>74</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 219.

## Concluding Remarks

What makes the fundamental core of secularism is the belief that “in his whole conduct, man should be guided exclusively by considerations derived from present life itself. Anything that is above or beyond the present life should be entirely overlooked.”<sup>75</sup> The questions about the existence or non-existence of God, about the mortality or immortality of the soul, and the like, according to secularism, should not be asked and no motive of action can be based. It further states that all motives derived from Christian religion are both worthless and baseless. It maintains that the things which are considered as secular are very separate and independent from the Church as land is from the ocean.<sup>76</sup>

This principle in itself lacks the proper knowledge of the core values of religion, and in this case, Christianity and the Catholic Church. The Church in itself, just like secularism, is an advocate and is more keen on the improvement of this life, and it has a lot of respect for scientific and technological advancement of the modern age. But the Church maintains that “the present life cannot be looked upon as the end in itself, and independent of the future life.”<sup>77</sup> The reality of this material world only leads us to the knowledge and reality of the spiritual world, and “among the duties of present life must be reckoned those which arise from the existence and nature of God, the fact of Divine Revelation, and the necessity of preparing for the future life.”<sup>78</sup>

By the fact that secularism cannot deny that there is light and guidance elsewhere, they therefore cannot command us to exclusively follow the light and guidance of the secular truths, and from this perspective, we can say that only an atheist can claim and become a consistent secularist.<sup>79</sup>

If man makes the present happiness the only criteria for the value of life, then he will deliberately close his eyes to the divine realities of the presence of God, Divine Revelation and the future life. This will be due to the fact that, “if anything has to be known about God and future life, duties to be fulfilled in the present life are thereby

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<sup>75</sup> K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

<sup>77</sup> K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

<sup>78</sup> K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

imposed on all who would regulate life by reason and ennoble it by service.”<sup>80</sup> Things which are purely human therefore become inadequate, and the guidance and light which are found in secular truths must therefore be referred to and judged from a higher point of view. “Hence the present life in itself cannot be looked upon as the only standard of man’s worth.”<sup>81</sup> The sufficiency of this life, based on secular ideologies, purely gains its foundation on error, and human being for his integral development and growth must therefore use the material reality of present life to arrive at the Divine reality of the present and of the future.

All human beings, no matter where they find themselves, have the divine obligation to perform those religious duties which their conscience dictates to them.<sup>82</sup> This clearly shows that man is not only material as secularists tend to claim. Deep within us, we have a voice which always tells us that besides the material realities of our everyday lives, there is also the spiritual aspect, which the secularists tend to place in the periphery.

Man in his capacity as a living being, should not only engage himself in human sciences, but should also always ensure that the entirety of his life is directed to a higher and nobler pursuit which involves morality, religion and God himself.<sup>83</sup> “While fully recognizing the value of present life, the Church cannot look upon it as an end in itself, but only a movement towards a future life for which preparation must be made by compliance with the laws of nature and the laws of God.”<sup>84</sup> It is therefore true that, “there is no possible compromise between the Church and secularism, since secularism would stifle in man that which, for the Church, constitute the highest and truest motives of action, and the noblest human aspirations.”<sup>85</sup>

The Eastern - Orthodox Church theologians explicitly recognise that secularism poses a great challenge to the religious adherence in the modern world. One of them, *Alexander Schmemmann* once declared that secularism is a heresy; this is because it

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<sup>80</sup> K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

<sup>81</sup> K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

<sup>84</sup> K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2.

<sup>85</sup> K. KNIGHT, “Secularism” in *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, 3.

negates or denies that a human being is a religious being. Secularism denies the sacramentality of Christian's relationship to the Almighty God and to the world.<sup>86</sup> They affirm that secularism is a heresy because "[...] it affirms the world autonomy ...its self-sufficiency in terms of reason, knowledge and action. God is separated from the world, and humanity no longer has the ability to achieve communion with God in and through the world."<sup>87</sup>

They further maintain that secularism is a heresy because it separates man from God and the man in turn ignores or abandons his original calling as a worshipping, ascetic and Eucharistic being. It therefore removes the possibility of adoration or worship of the almighty God in the totality of human experience in the world. The religious values are therefore being destroyed and replaced by values which are either, economic, political and ethical, devoid of any religious imperatives.<sup>88</sup> Christianity and religious values are therefore being forced out of socio-political, economic and ethical aspects of the society. Society therefore becomes devoid of any religious values and imperatives.

Having looked at the reality of secularism in general, we shall now look at the reality of youth in Africa and the effects of secularism among the youth in the contemporary African society, and that will be the topic of our discussion in the subsequent chapter of this paper.

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. A. SCHEMANN, *For the Life of the World; Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 118.

<sup>87</sup> D. P. PEYNE – J. M. KENT, "An Alliance of the Sacred," 48-49.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. D. P. PEYNE – J. M. KENT, "An Alliance of the Sacred," 53.

## Chapter II

### 2. The Reality of Secularism among the Youth in the Contemporary African Society

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#### Introduction

Part of this chapter will mark the second foundational section of this paper, and the other part will deal with the general reality of the youth in the contemporary African society. We will start with the attempt to understand the term *youth*, and the factors that has enhanced the spread of secularism among the youth in the African society.

Youth has been understood as a transitional stage, a stage from childhood to adulthood. There is a common saying that *the youth are the future leaders*, or *the leaders of tomorrow*. Youth-stage is the time when the young people have a lot of energy and potentials, and the ideas that they hold at this stage in life are likely to accompany them and affect their entire lives. So when we look at the young people today, we can predict the type of the society that we will be having tomorrow. If secularism is spreading among the African youth today, then the future of our society is likely to be *secularistic*, and the good religious beliefs and morals which we have held in Africa for years, will just be a history to tell.

If secularism is spreading among the African youth, then we must be in a position to understand this category [youth] so that we may have a clear picture of the group we are dealing with or referring to.

This chapter therefore begins with a general presentation of the concept youth, before making a brief comparison and contrast between three terms, namely, youth, adolescence and adulthood. I will also briefly look at the youth in traditional African society before trying to see the changes and the causes of these changes in the African society.

On the other hand, if secularism is spreading among the contemporary African youth, then we must be in a position to clearly understand the reality and the living situation of the young people in Africa, in order to be able to efficiently deal with the situation or the reality of secularism among the contemporary African youth, in other words, to give appropriate pastoral response to this reality of secularism among the contemporary African youth.

I will therefore, in this chapter, treat the general reality of the youth in the contemporary African society. The chapter will still treat the relationship or the link that exist between secularism, urbanization and Church attendance, and it will further try to expose the secularistic situation of the youth in the contemporary African society, and I will put a keen eye on the reality and life circumstances and social conditions of the young people in the contemporary African society.

## **2.1. The Concept ‘*Youth*’**

The concept ‘*youth*’ in its common-layman’s daily usage refer to a *young person*, *an adolescent* or a *teenager*. All these usages brings to mind the connotation of tender age, and from this fact, it will be improper to call anybody in his or her advanced age, a youth. Another important point to note on the onset of this chapter is that, it will also be improper to call a young person or a youth, *immature*, due to the fact of their age. We cannot equate maturity or immaturity to chronological age; both old and young people alike could exist as mature or immature people.

The word ‘*youth*’ has been traditionally used to signify or refer to the transitional period that brings the change from childhood to adulthood. This movement from childhood to adulthood comes with responsibilities and search for identity which in turn brings crisis. Youth-stage can therefore be rightly called a stage of crisis in the moment of growth.

In relation to what have been mentioned above, youth-stage can in a loose sense be equated to *adolescence*. The word adolescence is “derived from the Latin word ‘*adolescere*’ which means to grow into maturity. It is the stage in one’s life between

childhood and adulthood.”<sup>89</sup> During this period in life, young people are confronted with several complicated challenges in their development process, complications that do not exclude rapid body changes. It’s also during this time that the young people are preoccupied with questions concerning their self-identity. At this stage, the young people are concerned with questions such as, who am I? Which profession or way of life should I embrace? And what shall I become?<sup>90</sup>

According to *Oxford Dictionary*, youth is a stage or “the time of life when a person is young, especially the time before the child becomes an adult.”<sup>91</sup>

On the other hand, According to *Kenyan National Youth policy*, a youth is defined as a young person “aged between 15–30 years. This takes into account the physical, psychological, cultural, social, biological and political aspects, which explains the Kenyan youth situation.”<sup>92</sup> *African Youth Charter* also defines youth as a young person aged between 15-35 years, but further states that it can also be defined according to different circumstances.<sup>93</sup>

A keen observation in regard to the above definitions will reveal that “the youth category lacks clear definition and in some situations, may be based on one’s social circumstances rather than chronological age or cultural position. In a given culture, pre-adolescent individuals may count as youth, while those in their 30’s or 40’s may also be included in this category.”<sup>94</sup> To give a simple example, it has been said that “Pre-adolescent children accused of committing violent crimes may be classified as adults in the U.S legal system. By the same token, young people in their 20’s have been labelled children in discussion to child labour.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> N. W. NDUNG’U, “The Youth and Africa’s Future,” 127.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. N. W. NDUNG’U, “The Youth and Africa’s Future,” 127.

<sup>91</sup> S. WEHMEIER, - al., ed. “Youth,” in *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 1713.

<sup>92</sup> MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, HERITAGE AND SPORTS, “Definition of Youth” in *The Final Draft of the Kenyan National Youth Policy*, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER, “Youth” in *The African Youth Charter, as adopted by the Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly, held on Banjul, the Gambia, on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2006*, 1.

<sup>94</sup> M. BUCHOLTZ, “Youth and Cultural Practices”, 526.

<sup>95</sup> M. BUCHOLTZ, “Youth and Cultural Practices”, 527.

Putting the above definitions into consideration, the following must therefore be taken into accounts whenever we want to define the term ‘*youth*’, namely; a) age, b) psycho-biological changes within an individual as one grows from childhood to adulthood, c) cultural and structural context from which and to which the term apply, d) the place of the young people in the specific society, and finally e) the wider society and how people look at the specific situations of the young people in the society.

### **2.1.1. The Comparison between Youth, Adolescence and Adulthood**

It has been said that, while the youth-stage is a flexible social group/category, adolescence on the other hand must be seen on the ground of both biological and social conditions, and it must be understood as a cultural universal. The study of adolescence must be seen as the search for cross-cultural generalization and variations in the social, biological or bodily make-up and psychological characteristics of this universal category called adolescent stage.<sup>96</sup>

Youth stage, from its own perspective, can be described as a stage of crisis. This is because it’s a transitory stage where young members of the society try to get their identity towards adulthood. They develop to become full and responsible members of the society. It’s a stage when young people detach themselves from their families and form secondary or new relationships, completing full time education, and they definitely make a family of their own and choose a career, profession and the type of life they want to embrace.

To contrast and connect etymologically the concept of adolescence with adulthood, I will say that adolescence, which comes from Latin word *adolescere*, and means to grow up, is always connected with the senses of growth, transition and incompleteness. On the other hand, the word *adult* derives its connotation from the Latin word *adultum* which is the past participle of the Latin verb *adolescere* (to grow up) and signify or indicates the notion of completeness and completion. It’s in this sense that the

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. M. BUCHOLTZ, “Youth and Cultural Practices”, 528.

term adolescence has been put to use in social sciences to signify the state or the situation where people grow from childhood to maturity.<sup>97</sup>

Adolescence normally concentrates “on how bodies and minds are shaped for adult futures, the study of youth [on the other hand] emphasizes instead on the here and now of young people’s experience, the social and cultural practices through which they shape their world.”<sup>98</sup> In comparison between adolescence and youth, we can argue that all adolescents belong to the category of youths, but not all youth are adolescents.

To be specific, adolescence is a period when a young person develops from childhood to adulthood, both physically and psychologically, and the age of adolescence ranges roughly from thirteen to eighteen. It takes more into account the biological and psychological development.<sup>99</sup> Youth-stage on the other hand is a phase that starts at puberty and ends when the body has more or less finished growing. From another perspective, we can say that youth-stage extends through the different phases of adolescence and post adolescence period, and that in some countries, goes till mid-thirties. Youth can still be seen as a social category framed by particular social institutions, among them, school and work. Still further, youth can be viewed as something which is culturally determined, and it brings a strong interplay with musical, visual and verbal signs that denote what is young in relation to what is childish or adult. To talk of youth, means that you are referring to the days when someone is attractive, capable, and full of promise, ‘Youth’ means that someone is in his primes for the future.<sup>100</sup>

### **2.1.2. Youth in the Traditional African Society**

In traditional African societies, the young people were accorded a special place. This is clear because they were seen as the continuation of the society’s lineage. Education was a very important aspect of preparing the youth for their future roles as adults and it also acted as a way of incorporating the young people into the life of the

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<sup>97</sup> Cf. M. BUCHOLTZ, “Youth and Cultural Practices”, 532.

<sup>98</sup> M. BUCHOLTZ, “Youth and Cultural Practices”, 532.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. S. WEHMEIER, et.al, ed., “Adolescent,” in *Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary*, 21.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. C. CONGION, “Youth: A Gift and a Challenge, a Global Perspective,” 15-16.

society. Education was a process that started at the family level and the parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, were all involved in shaping the young ones either socially, economically or spiritually. The accepted human values like honesty, respect, obedience and generosity were encouraged and praised by the entire society.<sup>101</sup>

As the young people grew up, they were gradually introduced to the wider community, in which they were trained by different agents such as their age-mates, relatives and the whole society, so that they can become responsible members of the same society, and all the members of it (the society) were equally responsible for this formation.<sup>102</sup>

Adolescence was given special attention due to the fact that it was during this time that one graduated from childhood to adulthood. Puberty rites such as circumcision were performed at this period. The ritual of circumcision was accompanied by instructions which aimed at addressing issues connected to bodily, emotional changes and other issues that they were going through, and they were also taught about their future roles as adults in the society in which they belonged.<sup>103</sup>

It's through initiation that the youth were incorporated physically, socially and religiously into the corporate life of the society. It's during this time that the youth were introduced into adult life and were allowed to share in the full privileges, duties and responsibilities of the society. This happened when they withdrew from the society for a period of time in the forest or to some specifically prepared places or huts away from the village. It's during this time that they received secret instruction before they were allowed to re-join their relatives and the entire society. This was a symbolic experience and a sign of the process of the following: a) dying, represented by the exclusion or separation from the community to separate secluded places; b) living in the spirit world, represented by being instructed into the new values of the society, values which they were expected to cherish and hold for the rest of their lives; c) being reborn or resurrected, represented by

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<sup>101</sup> Cf. N. W. NDUNG'U, "The Youth and Africa's Future," 128.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. N. W. NDUNG'U, "The Youth and Africa's Future," 128.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. N. W. NDUNG'U, "The Youth and Africa's Future," 128.

joining other members of the society after the period of separation and secret instructions.<sup>104</sup>

Scholars have mentioned that there are three stages in which every rite, including initiation rites follows, namely, a) Separation - this is done in a secluded place, and away from the rest of the community for some time, b) Liminal or Threshold Stage – this is where the secluded members of the society are instructed into the new values of the society, c) the Rite of Incorporation or incorporation stage – where one gets the new status and new identity.<sup>105</sup> In the African society, it is during the incorporation stage that the young people leave their carefree attitude of the youth to become responsible and full members of the society.

Even though there was no clear-cut age limit for the term youth in traditional African society, but considering the above indications, I can say that youth-stage in traditional African society was the period immediately prior to initiation rites, including the period prior to the *separation* and *Liminal/threshold* period as indicated in the above paragraph, but before the *incorporation* stage. Incorporation stage brings the young people from youth-hood or youth stage, to adulthood or being a full member of the society.

After the initiation ceremony, there was no room among the young adults for anxiety about the future. Questions such as, *who am I*, or *what shall I become*, were taken care of during the training seasons that formed part of the rite of passage. This education in traditional African communities was holistic in nature. It incorporated the socio-economic, cultural, spiritual and political aspect of the life of the young people and indeed it prepared them to fit in their respective communities, whether it was agricultural community, fishing community, pastoral or hunting occupation, or any other community which was present in the traditional African society.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 121.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, *African Culture, an Overview*, 61-64

<sup>106</sup> Cf. N. W. NDUNG'U, "The Youth and Africa's Future," 128.

## **2.2. Factors that Brought Secularism in the African Society**

We will be cheating ourselves if we still claim that the traditional understanding of youth and society still persist in our modern African society. As Mbiti puts it, “Africa is caught up in world revolution which is so dynamic that it has almost got out of human control. It’s a revolution of man as a whole and therefore no people or country can remain un-affected by this new rhythm of human history.”<sup>107</sup> This revolution started from around mid-nineteenth century, gaining momentum towards twentieth century, and it affects religious, economic and political life. In other words, it affects the entirety of individual’s life in the society.<sup>108</sup>

The traditional life is far gone and new realities are taking hold of African people in whichever state of life they happen to find themselves in. Changes are taking place through the means of science and technology, modern communication and mass Media, schools and universities, cities and towns and nothing can stop this rhythm or slow it down.<sup>109</sup>

To better understand the issue at hand, I feel that we should understand the causes of this rapid change, from traditional to modern, so that we can clearly understand the situation of the modern African youth in regard to secularism.

### **2.2.1. Arrival of Christian Missionaries as a Cause of Rapid Change**

Christian missionaries “came to Africa, not simply carrying the Gospel of New Testament, but as a complex phenomenon made up of western culture, politics, science, technology, medicine, schools and new methods of conquering nature.”<sup>110</sup> With Christianity, there was a radical shift from the traditional form of life to the modern form of life. “The missionaries established and pioneered schools everywhere and these schools became nurseries for change.”<sup>111</sup> Mission churches played an important role in

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<sup>107</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 216.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 216.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 216-217.

<sup>110</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 217.

<sup>111</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 217.

Africa by advocating for modernization especially through Western education which was immediately recognized by Africans as key to advancement in the society.<sup>112</sup>

The young men and women who attended these schools became the agents of change. They did not only assimilate religion, but also science, politics and technology among others, and they finally became detached or separated from their African roots, and became vehicles or agents carrying the changes and implanting them in their African villages.<sup>113</sup>

Through missionaries too came European medicine and knowledge of hygiene which, however, had a slow influence at the beginning. In addition to the physical impact, the new medicine prepared people psychologically to become more receptive to western culture and education. Eventually, the new form of medical care and knowledge begun to reduce infant mortality, and put under control diseases...<sup>114</sup>

The traditional known life was gone, and probably the African religiosity, referred to by Mbiti as *notorious*, was gone with it. New era, probably the one we call modern or postmodern was here with us in Africa, and it has remained to stay, and we are not ready to get back anymore.

### **2.2.2. Expansion of Europe in Africa as a Cause for Rapid Change**

We can't deny the fact that the nature of our modern African countries and states are in large-part due to the impact and legacy of the colonial rule.<sup>115</sup> This colonial rule can be in other words referred to as the expansion of Europe into Africa. "European conquest of Africa reached its final climax with the *Berlin Conference of 1885* at which the major powers of Europe politically shared out the whole of Africa apart from Ethiopia and Liberia."<sup>116</sup> This ownership of Africa by Europeans meant among other things "the arrival of European settlers, businessmen, gold and diamond diggers, colonial administration, the founding of new cities, the construction of railways and roads ... Whether consciously or unconsciously, Europe began to transform Africa and if possible

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<sup>112</sup> Cf. J. HAYNES, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, 24-25.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 217.

<sup>114</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 217.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. J. HAYNES, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, 24.

<sup>116</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 217.

to make it resemble itself in many aspects.”<sup>117</sup> It’s during this period of colonial rule that new urban centres were founded and Western cultures and values started to flow in Africa in different modes and perspectives.<sup>118</sup>

The traditional form of life was no-longer there. Europe partitioned Africa into different territories. Europe wanted to rule Africa, and so Europe began to change Africa from being traditional to being modern. Africa is no-longer the way it was traditionally. The new change in Africa “started and continued in blood and tears, in suppression and humiliation, through honest and dishonest means, by consent and by force, by choice and by subjection... the revolution came by both peace and force, and Africa could not be the same anymore.”<sup>119</sup>

The modern African youth, find themselves in the context where the traditional life is far gone, and the modern life is at hand. Even though Mbiti affirmed at the beginning of his book, *African Religions and Philosophy*, that *Africans are notoriously religious*, he said towards the end of the book that, “a new dichotomy has invaded Africa, driving a wedge between religious and secular life, which is something un-known in traditional life. Those who introduced Christianity to Africa, also brought with it doubt and unbelief.”<sup>120</sup>

### **2.3. The Link between Secularism, Urbanization and Church Attendance**

Scholars have indicated that the cause of secular reality of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in Europe, has been as a result of industrialization and urbanization,<sup>121</sup> and I can say that this can also be applied to African context. The springing-up of towns and cities in Africa, has always been associated with the modern science and technology, communication and mass media, schools and universities.<sup>122</sup> All these are associated in one way or the other with a) human progress, b) unbelief, and c) consumer materialism, which have always been the main causes of secularism in Africa.

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<sup>117</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 217.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. J. HAYNES, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, 53-55.

<sup>119</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 218.

<sup>120</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 221.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 31.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 216

Owen Chadwick<sup>123</sup> in his book, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* indicated that it is the mass migration of people from rural areas to urban areas in search for employment and better living conditions that creates secular society. When the rural folks reach towns and cities, they stop attending Church and this is due to the fact that the environment in which they find themselves (towns and cities) are totally different from the environments from which they came (rural areas).

The people in the rural areas are reverential and submissive to the situations and institutions of the society and of the organized religions. In towns and cities on the other hand, the migrants find themselves in a pluralistic and carefree environment, and they do not immediately form part of the community in which Church-going is an accepted practice.<sup>124</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, church attendance was associated with affluence and respectability, and the poor migrants reaching towns and cities felt that they were becoming social oddity if they embraced the practice of Church attendance. They therefore became unconscious secularists and unconscious Christians, and the stage was therefore set for religious indifferentism and secularism.<sup>125</sup> Non-attendance at Church is [therefore] the first stage in the process of secularization, [secularism] and religious indifferentism.”<sup>126</sup>

It's mostly in towns and cities in Africa that we find various human interactions in industries, institutions of higher learning and there is also all means of modern technologies which have worked as promoters of secularists ideas in Africa. Scholars therefore have identified that secularism in Africa has its epicentres in African towns and cities. This is not only due to intense interaction between people from different backgrounds and intensified struggle for survival for the limited town resources, but it can also come from a carefree attitude and the fact that nobody cares about what others

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<sup>123</sup> Owen Chadwick was a British writer and a prominent historian of Christianity. He was a *Regis* professor of modern history at the University of Cambridge between 1968-1983. Apart from this book, '*The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*,' he also wrote books such as, *The Reformation*, *The Victorian Church*, *The Popes*, and *European Revolution* and because of his works, he received the awards of *Wolfson Prize of History* and *Michael Malmsey*. This information is taken from, Macmillan: by books by Owen Chadwick, US. [macmillan.com/search/564272/owen+cchadwick](http://macmillan.com/search/564272/owen+cchadwick) {17-10-2011; 15:24}

<sup>124</sup> Cf. O. CHADWICK, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century*, 93-106.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 31.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 29.

are doing, whether they are attending Church or not, moral or not, religious or not. Everybody is struggling to survive.

These attitudes are not only finding themselves in the environment of towns and cities in Africa, but secularistic ideals are also spreading slowly into African rural set-ups. It's therefore necessary to study the modern trends of urbanization in Africa in order to understand how Africa is prone, or will be prone to secularism now and in the future if no drastic measures are taken.

### **2.3.1. Secularism and the Urbanization Trends in African Society**

If African towns and cities are considered as the epicentres of secularistic ideas and beliefs, then we must understand the population trends, especially in African towns and cities, and we must also understand the settlement trends and the springing up of urban centres in Africa, so that we can be able to put into place pastoral programmes that can counteract the spread of secularism in Africa.

The population of the world has been growing at a lower rate until 1750. In that year (1750), the population of the world stood at approximately one billion people.<sup>127</sup> This figure increased to 6.8 billion people by 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2009, with Africa having a total population of 1.01 billion people.<sup>128</sup> This world population figure reached 7 billion people by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011.<sup>129</sup> The projection of the population prospects of the world indicates that if the fertility rate remains constant as it is now in all the countries of the world, then the world population by the year 2050 will stand at 11 billion people, with African population moving from 1.01 billion in 2009 to 2.999 or approximately 3 billion people by 2050.<sup>130</sup> This shows that the population of Africa will have tripled within a span of approximately 40 years.

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<sup>127</sup> Cf. S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 9.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. UNITED NATIONS, *Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Population Division, World Population Prospects*, 3.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. E. FORTUNATE – A. MUTAMBO, “Birth Control Takes Centre Stage as World Population Hits 7 Billion,” 3.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. UNITED NATIONS, *Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Population Division, World Population Prospects*, 3.

As the population increases, people start looking for employment and settlement areas, and as the search for employment opportunities and better living conditions continues, majority of people move to urban centres and there they meet new ideas, people and way of living.

The research done on the city trends in the world indicates that, world over, there were 2400 cities with over 100,000 people by 1988, and among these cities, 286 Of them had a population of over 1 million people. From another perspective, it's only 14% of the world population who lived in cities in 1920, but by 2000, 50% of world population were living in cities, and out of these 50%, two third of them were from developing countries.<sup>131</sup>

Africa on her own part by 1988 had fewer people living in urban centres compared to other regions of the world, but its towns and cities were growing faster than those of the other parts of the world.<sup>132</sup> It was predicted in 1997 that the number of African town dwellers will be 40% of the total population by the year 2000, and this figure will increase to over 50% of the total population of Africa by 2025.<sup>133</sup> African towns and cities has therefore been considered as the “principal entry points for consumer materialism and the secularizing ideas transmitted by western media and information technology.”<sup>134</sup>

Research done by *Daystar University College in 1988* indicates that Africa had a total of 19 cities with residents between 1–4 million people, by the year 1980. They projected that by the year 2000; there will be 52 cities in Africa with population between 1 – 4 million people, and by the year 2025, 71 cities with population between 1 - 4 million people. The number of cities in Africa with population between 1 – 4 million people will increase to 130 by 2050. Cities with more than 4 million residents are sometimes called *super-cities*, and by the year 1980, the same research indicates that

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 9-10.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 10.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 32.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 30.

there was only one super-city in Africa and that was Cairo-Egypt. This was projected to increase to 12, 36 and 60 super cities in the years 2000, 2025 and 2050 respectively.<sup>135</sup>

Considering that there will be more than 50% of the African population living in African towns and cities by the year 2025, we must take note that these urban dwellers will continue to continually interact with the people from the rural areas. We cannot deny that the rest of African non-urban areas, are just periphery of the African towns and cities, and therefore the virus of secularism will continue spreading outward from urban to the African rural areas.<sup>136</sup>

For most of the town population, urbanization does not substitute a coherent modern culture for traditional one. What it does is to modify the traditional cultures in a drastic manner, eroding traditional concepts and behaviours, impoverishing human sensibilities, and substituting material values for religious and moral ones.<sup>137</sup>

Considering the age bracket of the town dwellers in Africa basing our argument on the case study of Nairobi city, we realize that one-third of the population is below age 14, and 73% of the Nairobi population is under 30 years of age.<sup>138</sup> This trend can also be applied to other cities of Africa and it shows that the majority of people who are living in towns and cities are youths, and therefore they are the ones who are most prone to secularism.

### **2.3.2. Secularism and Church Attendance in Africa**

Non-attendance at Church has been identified as the first stage in the process of secularization, secularism, and religious indifferentism<sup>139</sup> and this religious indifferentism can take many forms, for example, atheism to the extreme end or secularism on the other side.<sup>140</sup>

The study of Nairobi Church attendance called *Nairobi Church Survey* done by *Daystar University College* in 1988, indicates that the total attendance in all of the

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<sup>135</sup> Cf. S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 10 – 12.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 32.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 33.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 13.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 29.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. D. MURRAY, *Secularism and the New Europe*, 1.

churches in Nairobi in each and every particular Sunday celebration in 1963 was 30,000, and this figure increased fivefold to 150,000 in 1986.<sup>141</sup> From the surface value, one may say that a wonderful evangelization is being done and Nairobi residents are really committed to Church participation. But taking the total population of Nairobi city into consideration, the research found that “less than twelve per cent of Nairobi’s population is in Church on a typical Sunday! That means that for every person in Church on a Sunday, there are seven others who are not.”<sup>142</sup> That gives an indication that, out of 1.6 million people living in Nairobi by 1988, only 150,000 people are in Church on any typical Sunday and 1.45 million people do not care about going to church.<sup>143</sup>

More information reveals that out of the Nairobi’s population, only 8% (that is to say 1 out of every 12) attend Church every week. A total of 20% of the total Nairobi’s population (1 out of every five) attend Church, at-least once in a month. This shows that the remaining majority (80%) do not attend any Sunday service or any Church activity. In other words, majority of people who claim to be Christians do not attend any Church in Nairobi. “This extremely low Church attendance figure points to a serious problem in a country where over 70% of the people (and perhaps as many as 80% of the Nairobi’s population) claims to be Christians.”<sup>144</sup>

In comparison, the weekly Church attendance in rural areas stands at 40% of the total rural areas’ population, compared to weekly Church attendance in Nairobi which stands at 12% of the total city population, and less frequent Church attendance standing at 20%, while only 4% of Nairobi’s population are involved in Christian services and Church commitments beyond attending Church on Sundays. This shows that the Church attendance in the city scores poorly in comparison to the Kenyan rural areas.<sup>145</sup> This trend of Church attendance in the city of Nairobi, as compared to the Church attendance in the rural areas of Kenya, is similar to other African cities which are dominantly Christian.

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<sup>141</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 17.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 18.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 18.

<sup>144</sup> S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 19.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 35-36.

We can therefore conclude that “urbanization and Church attendance are related and what happened in the nineteenth century Europe is happening all over again in Africa.”<sup>146</sup> As it might look that the number of people attending Church has increased fairly in Nairobi, we can only affirm that “Church attendance has only kept pace with the growth of the city’s population. The percentage of the people attending Church has remained constant at 9 – 12% over the past 20 or more years.”<sup>147</sup> The fact that only 20% of the Nairobi’s population occasionally attends Church shows that there is a serious spiritual crisis. We still don’t know if the 20% of the Nairobi’s population who frequent Church are really converted people and are spiritually healthy.<sup>148</sup>

The 80% of the Nairobi’s population who do not attend Church can be categorized into two groups; a) 20% are those who follow other religions apart from Christianity (non-Christians), and b) 60% are Christians, but for one reason or the other, they have decided not to attend any Church. They are just Christians by name or *nominal Christians*. Many of these people called nominal Christians have sometimes in their lives participated in Church activities, but for reasons known to them, they have decided that the Church attendance is not important to them,<sup>149</sup> or in other words, do not solve their problems and needs.<sup>150</sup>

## **2.4. The Secularistic Situation of the Youth in the Contemporary African Society**

We can’t deny the fact that the majority of the African youth face many challenges in the daily process of their growth. Life for them is a daily struggle that comes with its pain and anxieties. The traditional African set up is long gone, and the modernity has dawned, creating a conducive-atmosphere for the growth of secularism in a context that was traditionally governed by religious imperatives. Let us briefly look at

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<sup>146</sup> A. SHORTER–E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 35.

<sup>147</sup> S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 19.

<sup>148</sup> S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 12-21.

<sup>149</sup> S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 21-22.

<sup>150</sup> It will be our pastoral role to ensure that these people called *nominal Christians* are told that they are not Christians in the true sense of the word and they should be instructed into the true doctrines of Christianity.

some areas which are severely affected by the modernism or modern change in Africa, creating conducive environments for secularistic ideals.

### 2.4.1. Individual

In the traditional African society, there was “the traditional solidarity in which the individual says ‘*I am because we are and since we are therefore I am.*’<sup>151</sup> This is no longer the case in the contemporary African society. The individual, especially the young people in our African society today, finds themselves alone in the crowd. This is more evident in our towns and cities than in rural areas, but such individualism will soon spread to rural areas as well.

We know that the youth always long for love, hope, future and joy. In short, they want a meaningful life both at the family and the social level,<sup>152</sup> and our African youth are no exemption to this. The problem is that the situation in which we are in Africa, where we are changing from traditional to modern, is not ready to provide these values to our African youth.

So in our urban centres in Africa, the youth find themselves that, amidst the many people who live in these towns and cities, they are alone among the crowd. When he is sick or in some difficult situations, perhaps only one or two other people or none, know about it and can make an attempt to come to his or her aid. In such a situation, when somebody feels hungry, he will automatically feel that begging for food from the neighbours is shameful or unrewarding or both. When an individual receives the bad news, despite the fact that he is amidst the crowd in the streets of cities and towns, he cries alone. The masses around the individual in our cities and towns in Africa are both blind and deaf to him, the masses are indifferent and do not care about individuals as persons.<sup>153</sup>

This individualism of a person amidst the crowd must also be seen in the perspective of indifferentism. These are some of the inner aspects of secularism because

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<sup>151</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 221

<sup>152</sup> Cf. N. W. NDUNG’U, *the Youth and Africa’s Future*, 129.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 225

we become indifferent to the joys and sufferings of others, not recognizing the divine image in the faces of other human beings.

This individualism does not only affect an individual as such, but the entire society, recognizing that, as human beings, we are just a network of relationships. In this context, we can borrow *Plato's* understanding of society when he stated that “the society is the individual enlarged.”<sup>154</sup>

This means that individual is just but a reflection of the society, and conversely, the society is nothing but a reflection of the individuals living in it. According to Plato, there is a close and fitting analogy between the individuals and the society. The only real difference between the two is in terms of size. We have to agree with Plato that the character of individuals living in a specific society is clearly manifested in the societies these individuals make. This is because individuals are the nucleus, principle elements or components that makes up the society. On the other hand, society also forms individuals to be what they are. The social structures and institutions within the society are therefore very instrumental in the formation of who individuals become within a specific society.

If we take into consideration that the society is a group of human beings, held together by agreement for reasons that are mutually beneficial to the individual members, then we will agree that societies operate as a whole, as a collective body chiefly in ways that look out for the highest common good of all. *Herbert Spencer*<sup>155</sup> in his sociological studies equated society to a living organism. To us, the best direct analogy that we can equate to the society is the human body. Within the human body, the cells are alive independently, yet they group together and establish roles, responsibilities and relationships that allow a greater whole to exist. The cells gain from specific roles they play because they are allowed to be what they are effectively. Further, they are given a limited awareness of the whole that their efforts aid in creating.

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<sup>154</sup> F. OCHIENG' ODHIAMBO, *Handbook on Some Social-Political Philosophers*, 3.

<sup>155</sup> *Herbert Spencer* was a British Sociologist and a philosopher and he was one of the prominent figures in the evolutionary theories of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and his reputation at that time rivaled that of Charles Darwin who is considered as the father of evolutionary theory. He applied this theory also to philosophy, psychology and to the study of society. Cf. “Herbert Spencer” in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2.

From such analogy, if individuals in the contemporary African society fail to take into consideration the benefit of the whole society, then the society that will come out of such individualism and indifferentism, will only aid in creating an atmosphere where only the individual matters, and the religious teachings that puts the love of God and the love of neighbour at the centre, will be out of context, and I can't hesitate to mention that such environments only facilitates secularistic values, values that do not put God, religion and religious-ethical values at the centre.

In such situation where one is only for himself, the individuals in such context look for consolation in drugs or alcoholism to escape loneliness, prostitution or illicit unions not for commitment but for personal satisfaction, and other un-becoming behaviours. The result is that there is a total decay in the entire society, and the ethical-religious teachings are forgotten in this context.

Individualism also crops-in in the family set-up, to the extent that there is little or minimal exchange and communication between family members. In most families, especially those living in urban areas, the communication has been replaced by the media especially the TV (Television), where members of the family sit in-front of the TV in silence all the evening long, watching programmes which sometimes do not promote moral and *unitive* growth of its members.

#### **2.4.2. The Family**

The first environment that highly influences our growth, all the way from childhood to adulthood, is the family. It's here that we are born, and it's here that we acquire the first basic and fundamental skills of life. Family provides the protection and early training of the children, and it's here that individuals must first be trained to become responsible and competent members of the society.

But the family in Africa today, is one of the institutions that have been severely affected by the modern changes to its very roots. The traditional aspect of the family where a person fully and really experiences himself and of the other members of the society is far gone. The modern change in Africa has introduced many individuals into a

situation which was completely not known in traditional life, and which that traditional life offers no relevant preparation.<sup>156</sup> The modern African families have neither firm roots in the traditional past, nor in the contemporary modern and technological aspect of the modernity.

The African family today in most cases no-longer acts as a model to the youth due to the fact that it's being attacked from all corners of social life. The family as an "institution is under threat from divorce, separation, secularism, anti-family campaigns, poverty, alcoholism, violence, Satanism, generation-gap, absenteeism, polygamy and other social ills."<sup>157</sup>

The size of the family is shrinking from the known concept of extended family to the nuclear family in the modern African context. The young generations are challenging the authority, and the respect that the elders and parents enjoyed in traditional morality and customs seems to be dwindling. Many African families are experiencing the outburst of children's rebellious behaviors towards their parents. The fact that the young people have to leave their families to attend schools and universities is weakening the family solidarity, and the education and training of the children are being passed from parents and society to teachers and schools, where education become more of schooling than education itself, and the learning concentrates more on books than preparing the young people for mature adult life and for future career.<sup>158</sup>

There has been a considerable increase in the instability within marriage and family in African context under modern strains, giving rise to higher rate of divorce and separation than was known in the traditional life. Even though official polygamy is dying slowly in modern African society, it's giving way to concubinage which is at rise in modern African towns and cities. Another issue at rise affecting youth and the family at-large is prostitution, geared specifically for economic gains,<sup>159</sup> and is being practiced by many African youths especially the young men and women in universities and colleges.

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<sup>156</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 219.

<sup>157</sup> A. O. OJORE, *Problems of Youth in Africa*, 27.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 225.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 226.

A research done in Addis-Ababa Ethiopia shows that young girls get out of their families to the streets due to poverty in their families, and they start engaging in prostitution as a way of earning a living,<sup>160</sup> and this trend can also be applied to other African towns and cities.

One serious drawback in modern African family life is the fact that whereas under the traditional set-up both boys and girls receive preparatory education concerning marriage, sex and family life, especially during and after their initiation rites, modern schools give little and often no such preparatory education. These schools spend more time teaching young people about dissecting frogs and about colonial history, than they ever spend teaching them how to establish happy homes and family lives. Unless this structure and system of education is changed, we are heading for tragic social, moral and family chaos whose harvest is not far away.<sup>161</sup>

With this type of family set-up in Africa, secularism cannot fail to crop in. If families cannot take their role to advocate for religious upbringing of their children, then the children coming up from such families will definitely borrow the secular, and probably, atheistic beliefs in their daily affairs and undertakings. That will be an opening-up to secularism in the society by the fact that the Godly and religious views and undertakings will be pushed to the periphery, and secular ideals takes the upper hand.

### **2.4.3. Education**

In the modern African society, “the family is no-longer the only institution that provides education and social influence to the youth and children.”<sup>162</sup> Since independence, African states have tremendously increased the number of learning institutions, but the challenge of staffing and providing sufficient equipment to these schools still persist even up-to date. The children from rich families most often find themselves in private schools and colleges, and still some, go to foreign countries to pursue their education there. Since African youth go to practically every country in the world to pursue their further education, they are exposed to various systems and trends of education, economics and politics, which sometimes are hard to harmonize when the students return to their home countries after studies and start working.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Cf. L. MWITI, “A Piece of Addis by Night,” 1-2.

<sup>161</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 227.

<sup>162</sup> G. M. D. FIHAVANGO, “Leadership and Family in the New Testament,” 185.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 227.

These students pursuing foreign education and studies also often find themselves in the *mercy* of ideologies which are practically foreign to Africa, and which expose them to thinking and styles of life devoid of the teachings of the Church, and of good moral values. In such situations, they incorporate and absorb these schools of thought and when they return back home, they do not only carry with them the intellectual wealth they have acquired during their days of studies abroad, but also these mode of thinking which they acquired during their stay abroad.

Considered by the society as the educated lot, their thoughts and ideas are respected and sought for especially by the generations after them, and in this case, the youth. These educated persons turn out to be the advocators of secularism, ideologies such as *Machiavelism* in politics, *materialism* in philosophy and economics, *socialism*, *maxism* etc. Most of these will be dealt with in chapter four, as we deal with globalization as an agent of secularism.

The institutes of higher learning in Africa also pose a danger, in the sense that it's mostly in these institutions that secularistic attitudes and behaviours are learned or acquired. Majority of young men and women, who join these institutes of higher learning as innocent girls and boys, end up with some deviant behaviour like prostitution and drug abuse. Research done in Kenya shows that many of the students in universities and institutions of higher learning live double lives, for example, some are prostitutes and students at the same time, or students and drug dealers. It's in these institutes of higher learning that the desire for money and flashy lifestyles leads students to live double lives, where politicians and rich men prey on the needy youth, and where young men and women resort to prostitution, drug trafficking and crime as a means of earning a living.<sup>164</sup> The institutions of higher learning are the places where girls live as students during the day and high priced escort girls by night.<sup>165</sup> It's therefore true that our young women and men in the institutions of higher learning are exposed to such immoral behaviours, and therefore helps in the spread of unethical and un-Christian ways of living.

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<sup>164</sup> Cf. M. KEINO, "The Double Life of university Students," 3 - 4

<sup>165</sup> Cf. S. W. KANG'ARA, "Take Measures to Protect University Women from Exploitation and Violence," 13.

#### 2.4.4. Urbanization

Urbanization poses another great challenge to the youth in the modern African society. Prior to colonial days, there were only few towns in Africa “apart from those in Northern Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, the East coast and some in Western Africa.”<sup>166</sup> We know that the world as a whole is not fully urbanized, but it will soon be. We can’t deny the fact that “one of the major problems emerging in Africa [was] is how to fit urbanization to the African family institution.”<sup>167</sup>

With the rise of urbanization in Africa, “there are questions of housing, slums, earning and spending money, alcoholism, prostitution, corruption and thousands of young people roaming about in search for employment.”<sup>168</sup> The question of street children and increasing number of beggars in these towns and cities is a challenge that needs a comprehensive address.

With urbanization today in Africa, “people have become more and more mobile because of searching for money and better living. This has caused breakdown of the old pattern of extended family.”<sup>169</sup> Most of the people affected in this scenario are the young people who leave their ancestral lands in search for better living condition. Among the married youth, the separation of the young couples in this context brings with it some emotional, psychological, sexual and marital imbalance between the couples. The children in this context grow up without a father at home, and in the long run, children no longer have a clear picture of the father during their moment of growth.<sup>170</sup> “For the wife, the husband is simply a person who descends upon her once a year or less often, to quench his sexual passion, fertilize her and disappear like a frogman. He hardly shares in the daily responsibilities and concerns of raising a family.”<sup>171</sup>

In such situations, the wife has a responsibility of being a father and a mother to the children. It’s true that in such situations, little can be said or done to salvage the

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<sup>166</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 220.

<sup>167</sup> G. M. D. FIHAVANGO, “Leadership and Family in the New Testament,” 187.

<sup>168</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 224.

<sup>169</sup> G. M. D. FIHAVANGO, “Leadership and Family in the New Testament,” 187.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 226.

<sup>171</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 226.

difficulties arising in such context. But we can't deny that in most cases there are some forms of unfaithfulness or moral behaviour to bridge the emotional gap that exist between these two married people in the absence of the other.

A keen look reveals that a religious ethical code of conduct is placed outside the daily routine of life, and what takes the upper hand is how to be comfortable within the socio-cultural context, provided the material gain are met for the up-keep of the family despite the emotional and psychological stress of the ones involved.

The problem of congestion and poor housing condition within most of the families in urban context reveals that there is no privacy, especially with regard to issues related to sexual act; and in most cases, this is an important reason for the moral deterioration especially among the urban dwellers.<sup>172</sup>

#### **2.4.5. Ethical and Moral Problems**

We can't deny that there is break down of morals "and the loss of values, language and cultural tradition in the wake of colonialism, modernization and marginalization, and much more today in the time of globalization and urbanization,"<sup>173</sup> within our African context.

It's common nowadays to read in the African journals, things such as, "*Police investigate child sex gang*", where people have been accused of using young children, as young as ten, in the old profession of prostitution;<sup>174</sup> "*Woman wanted in US over assault*", where an African woman employed to take care of an elderly man was recorded hitting the old man several times on the stomach, a crime described as '*reckless endangerment and abuse of a vulnerable adult*,'<sup>175</sup> "*The Organ Merchant*" where mortuary attendants cut off body parts of the dead and sell, a business described as '*illicit trade which is profitable that it's now rivalling narcotics and small arms at the*

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. G. M. D. FIHAVANGO, "Leadership and Family in the New Testament," 187 -188.

<sup>173</sup> G. M. D. FIHAVANGO, "Leadership and Family in the New Testament," 187.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. F. MAKUNDA, "Police Investigate Child Sex Gang," 1-4.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. P. CHEPKEMOI, "Woman Wanted in US over Assault," 9.

*market place.*'<sup>176</sup> These are symptoms of the moral decadence appearing in our African society.

The ones affected most are the youths of our society who are struggling to meet their daily needs and challenges. The tribal ethics cannot accommodate itself in the changing situation. The modern society seems as if it requires its own morals suited to its type of life. Mostly in rural set-up, the individual's ethical conducts are normally naked in the eyes of almost every member of the society, and even-though community policing is gradually dying in the rural set-ups, members of the society in these set-ups cannot just act without reprimand from the society. In the contrary, in the modern urban context, individuals live his or her own lives and he or she is locked in the universe of his/her own.

In the city the individual is one in a loose conglomeration of men and women from different people and languages, races and nationalities. These are joined or related together not by bond of blood or betrothal, but by professions, places of work, clubs, factories, associations, hobbies, trade unions, sports, political parties, church denominations and religious ties. That is where the individual now finds himself, and often his loyalties are spread all over many of these affiliations.<sup>177</sup>

To act or not to act depends mostly on the individual rather than these affiliations, and therefore, even though moral behaviour can be determined somehow by these affiliations, a person is not bound by them due to the fact that he or she can create or break affiliations at will.

This is a situation that highly affects the way individual acts in relation to the society. He or she feels autonomous and think that he/she is the law and at the same time the law-giver in regard to ethical matters that pertain to himself.

#### **2.4.6. Politics**

To understand the change within the political level, one needs to have the basic history of Africa at hand. When colonial powers came to Africa, they suppressed, destroyed or modified the traditional political institutions, and Africans who in their history never knew the foreign rule, for the first time found themselves under some

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<sup>176</sup> Cf. S. MWAURA, "The Organ Merchant," 2-3.

<sup>177</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 224

foreign powers. But after the Second World War, African nationalists started to expel colonialists. The fact is that they managed to send away the colonial rulers, but the Africans inherited the colonial structure of government in the new African states which they founded.

The types of governments that we have in our modern African states cannot be said to be traditionally African. We have not only borrowed the political systems, but also the theories and ideologies supporting such political system.

Political ideologies such as *socialism*, *capitalism*<sup>178</sup> and *communism*<sup>179</sup> were borrowed and applied to the new African states. *Julius Kambarage Nyerere*, the then president of Tanzania, used socialism and modified it to be African socialism, and he said that it means that the wealth of the states should be used only for the benefit of our fellow men.<sup>180</sup> Other political ideologies like *Machiavellianism* and *Marxism* which advocates for ungodly principles in governance of the State are already engraved in the minds and mentality of most of our African leaders.<sup>181</sup>

A keen look into the political ideologies will show that in themselves, these ideologies act as a promoter to secularism; this is due to the fact that they are devoid of Godly and religious teachings. What makes them more secularistic is that they do not explicitly deny the existence of God, but at the same time, claim to advocate for the wellbeing of the individuals in the society without making reference to God, or denying the existence of the same.

### **2.4.7. Money Economy**

One of the factors which creates the rapid spread of secularism among the youth in the contemporary African societies is the so called '*money economy*'. This is an aspect

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<sup>178</sup> Capitalism is a political situation where the government's campaign for the private control and ownership of the means of production, and this is done without the interference of the government.

<sup>179</sup> *Communism* is a political ideology that tries to campaign for the idea that no-one in the state should own private property beyond what's absolutely necessary, and everybody should use everything within the society in common. Cf. W. DURANT, *the History of Philosophy*, 34.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. F. OCHIENG-ODHIAMBO, *Handbook on Some Social Political Philosopher*, 93.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. N. MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince*, 53-54.

which is making its force felt everywhere within the African continent. It brings in the thinking that everything, time and morality included, are just commodities to be sold and bought.<sup>182</sup> For most African youth, nothing matters provided it can bring some economic gains even if it contradicts the traditional African morality or the Church or religious teachings.

At the individual level, many feel that time spent in prayer should be channelled elsewhere to bring some economic gains. That's why many of the people, especially the poor Africans in towns and cities, spent their time on Sunday working especially in different artisan sectors to help them subsidize their weekly earnings. Sunday as a day dedicated for worship and thanksgiving to God can be by-passed, provided that such a day can be used to add more money to their income.<sup>183</sup> A study done before the year 1997 shows that 75% of the Nairobi residents live in lower income areas of the city, and 40% of them live below the official poverty line,<sup>184</sup> and other African towns and cities also follow in this trend. Even though the majority of these people are baptized Christians, what matters to them are how to put food on the table than to 'waste' their time in worship centres. This is another form of secularism. The majority of these people are those who are self-employed, and we can say that "the lifestyles of self-employed are an encouragement towards unconscious secularism ... Christianity loses credibility in the eyes of [the self-employed and the] unemployed and they are prone to lose religious faith itself."<sup>185</sup>

At the community level, we can't deny that "our economic poverty makes us a great target for political and ideological propaganda from powerful nations, and we must be aware of this helpless situation."<sup>186</sup> These political and ideological propagandas also accompany with them the western secularistic ideologies which our young people are not likely to escape.

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<sup>182</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 220

<sup>183</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER-E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 57-58.

<sup>184</sup> Cf. UNITED NATIONS, *United Nations Population Fund's 1996's state of World Population Report*, 4.

<sup>185</sup> A. SHORTER-E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa*, 66.

<sup>186</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 220.

Money economy has brought a situation in our context which was unknown in the traditional African set-up. Most of African people, especially young men and women are ready to do anything provided it can provide some economic gain. It is a normal phenomenon to see young university students moving around the streets as prostitutes, and young men looking for older women, not because of love, but because of the fact that there are some economic gains attached.

In such situations, young men and women lose the sense of sin, and once the sense of sin is gone, the sense of God goes away with it. Young people in Africa today rarely use the word sin or if they do, they do it only in a mocking way. This is a challenging situation because when we talk of sin, we immediately think of God. This is true because to admit that sin exists is to admit the existence of God too.<sup>187</sup> These are the type of secularistic situations that we have in our African context today.

#### **2.4.8. Culture and Society**

Culture is the people's total way of life. Everything that happens to the human beings happen within a specific context in the society, and therefore we cannot talk of culture without thinking of a specific society, and we can also not talk of a society without making reference to specific culture.

We know that "every human society transmits its values, norms and attitudes from generation to generation through process of culture-education that are tied to the rites of passage - birth, puberty, marriage and death."<sup>188</sup> We can argue that in each and every stable society, the rites of passage are moments and occasions for celebration of human values, norms, and attitudes through which cultural identity are confirmed and affirmed. But when a society undergoes cultural change or transformation either due to the fact of politics, technology, economy or religion, these norms are affected and it becomes difficult for the society to sustain cultural education.<sup>189</sup> We are living in a very

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<sup>187</sup> Cf. N. BRENNAN, et.al, *The Moral Life*, 119.

<sup>188</sup> J. N. K. MUGAMBI, "Rites of Passage and Human Sexuality in Tropical Africa Today," 228.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. J. N. K. MUGAMBI, "Rites of Passage and Human Sexuality in Tropical Africa Today," 228.

difficult moment in Africa and the urban centres which should be the first to promote human development are in chaotic situations.<sup>190</sup>

Our African society is undergoing such transformation and Africa men and women especially the youth, “find themselves in a situation where they oscillate between traditionalism and modernity without adequate knowledge of the values, norms and attitudes associated with both these perspectives.”<sup>191</sup>

Modern change in Africa force men and women to live in two half-cultures which are somehow difficult to reconcile; we live the foreign culture here in Africa only in parts, and we reject the other parts. At the same time, we kick away part of our traditional cultures while retaining the other part. But the speed by which we are shedding of the traditional life is faster than the speed by which we try to assimilate the modernity,<sup>192</sup> and the tragedy of the rapid change with its secularistic ideal lies here.

#### **2.4.9. Religion**

Throughout the human history, religion has been the central pillar in which different people in different societies and different cultures defined and authenticated their national ideologies and identities. Other pillars in this context are politics, kinship, economics, among others; but we still can't doubt that it's religion more than any other pillar that has helped different people to clearly shape and understand themselves, and it's with no doubt that many nations big or small, has raised heroes and villains, martyrs and inquisitors only in the name of religion.<sup>193</sup>

Religion has been commonly understood as belief in the Supreme Being or beings commonly known as God or gods, which have power to control the universe. *Oxford*

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<sup>190</sup> UNEP Volume I, *United Nation Environmental Programme*, 14.

<sup>191</sup> J. N. K. MUGAMBI, “Rites of Passage and Human Sexuality in Tropical Africa Today,” 229.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 221

<sup>193</sup> Cf. J. N. K. MUGAMBI, “Rites of Passage and Human Sexuality in Tropical Africa Today,” 229-231.

*Dictionary* defines religion as “the belief in the existence of God or gods, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them.”<sup>194</sup>

We can say that religion specifically refer to movements of the world like Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, African Religions, among others. Today, a new dichotomy has invaded Africa, bringing a big gap between religious and secular life. This is something which was unknown in the African traditional life, and the ones most affected are the young people in African society. We can't deny that the missionaries who introduced Christianity to Africa, also brought with it some form of doubt and unbelief, and it has been argued that there are some Africans who are now trying to live without religion. Whether they will succeed waits to be seen. Such type of reality is more in cities and among the educated elite, more than any other strata and place within the society.<sup>195</sup> That was probably some decades ago, now such type of thinking penetrates even to the remotest part of the African continent as the educated elite increase, and so their influence in the societies they happen to live in.

Many people still tend to believe that Africans are still ‘*notoriously religious*’ as was in the traditional set-up. In other words, that life and religion in Africa are intimately connected, and that the proper action and behaviour of the majority of the African people is that which is pleasing to God and what's commanded by God. Practically speaking, very few African people, if none, want to speak of secularism as a reality and a factor spreading in Africa. Taking into consideration that secularism is a reality spreading everywhere around the globe, we have to affirm with this; knowing that Africa too is affected, probably moving from a religion to religion-less culture of a kind.<sup>196</sup>

Issues such as “abortion, euthanasia, contraception, artificial insemination, homosexuality, lesbianism, genetic engineering, cloning or even violation of human rights, and vitro-fertilization”<sup>197</sup> are part of our daily experiences in the contemporary African society. These are things which are ungodly and contrary to Christian ethical teaching. Some of these things are foreign to Africa and its traditional culture.

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<sup>194</sup> S. WEHMEIER, et.al., ed. “Religion” in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 1231.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 221.

<sup>196</sup> M. M. THEURI, “Religion and Culture as Factors in the Development of Africa,” 188.

<sup>197</sup> M. M. THEURI, “Religion and Culture as Factors in the Development of Africa,” 187.

One of the prominent African leaders was once heard talking against religion. He in fact said, “I think the influence of religion in this country [Kenya] is very harmful. They don’t allow proper sex education in schools; don’t allow condoms in a country with HIV/AIDS. That kind of rubbish makes me mad.”<sup>198</sup> Some African intellectuals still think that they do not need religion because “far from being God’s family, the Church has been turned into business enterprise.”<sup>199</sup>

Can we really live without religion as some tend to think? That is a question that needs an intelligent answer and from our perspective, we need to define religion anew, probably from our modern perspective. Many scholars have defined religion as “any system of thought and action shared by a group, which gives the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion.”<sup>200</sup> This is not identical to the traditional definition that states religion to be a belief in Supreme Being. It can be said that “It is in this connection that one can candidly observe that each and every individual has a type of religion, because in any human existence there is the need of a frame of orientation and an object of devotion.”<sup>201</sup>

In consideration of the above definition we may ask, which kind of religion do African people, especially the youth, have? We can say that the secularized African society, especially among the young people, has its religion based on “...idols, power, money, sex, success, pleasure, corruption, tribalism and all forms of social evils.”<sup>202</sup> These are the social realities which are taking the place of God in the modern secularized African society, and they are severely affecting our young African people. God has been put into the periphery and the above mentioned realities; power, money, sex, pleasure, corruption, tribalism among others, takes the place of God. This is the religion that we have among the African youth today, worship of power and wealth. Almost all the young people of Africa want to live an extravagant and expensive life, not considering the ethical perspective of that life, or how they acquire the means to live such a life.

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<sup>198</sup> Cf. S. KUMBA, “Fear over Gays, Divorce and Abortion Key to Church’s Dissent on *Mutungu*,” 10

<sup>199</sup> I. MWANGI, “Who Needs Clergy Anyway?” 11.

<sup>200</sup> M. M. THEURI, “Religion and Culture as Factors in the Development of Africa,” 188

<sup>201</sup> M. M. THEURI, “Religion and Culture as Factors in the Development of Africa,” 188

<sup>202</sup> M. M. THEURI, “Religion and Culture as Factors in the Development of Africa,” 188

Africans are investing heavily on how to promote their physical wellbeing, forgetting that the spiritual aspect should also be cultivated for any integral human development.<sup>203</sup> Most of the countries around the globe tend to put their emphasis on physical amenities in improving physical material life and forgetting the spiritual aspect of the citizens.<sup>204</sup>

There have been so many religious sects and cults springing up in Africa within the last few decades, but a keen look will reveal that such type of cults and sects are not for the spiritual wellbeing of their followers, but for the benefit of few individuals, probably their founders, who want to use such means for their material gains. This is a very sad state of affair. These people use religion, and of course God to exploit the ignorant at the expense of their own economic gains. This can still be a very sad affair if some of our Christian {Catholic} pastors engage in such acts to enrich themselves.

From this, I can say that religion is taking a negative turn in Africa, from worshipping of God or Supreme Being, to the worship of secular realities. This is secularism of the highest order. This cannot be equated to atheism by the fact that despite giving secular realities an '*upper hand*', they acknowledge God, but reduce it to the secondary or tertiary level. Indeed God and religious values has been pushed out of the daily lives of many African youth today.

The secularism in Africa leads to the worship of secular realities; worship of power and money, worship of sex, success and pleasure, worship of corruption, tribalism, and all forms of secular realities and social evils. Another phase of secularism arise from the cult of modernism, from science and from technology which is gaining momentum as an object of worship in modern African society among the youth. Young people think that science and technology can answer all the needs and problems of human being. "The cult of modernity, science and technology [normally]are unconcerned about moral issues in development, unconcerned about the dignity of human person,"<sup>205</sup> and they don't recognize human being as a worshipping being, as an object made in the image and

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<sup>203</sup> Cf. Friends-of-the-Book Foundation, *Can Africans Claim the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 103-110.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. C. PUGH, ed., "Sustainability in Squatter Settlement," 144-149.

<sup>205</sup> M. M. THEURI, "Religion and Culture as Factors in the Development of Africa," 190.

likeness of God. In the African context, God is only invoked when all our earthly gods have failed us and we are in such a desperate situation. That is when most of our young African men and women think of God, but they do not do this in their daily life circumstances. In normal life situations, majority of the youth in Africa, live as if God do not exist, as was foretold by the prophet of atheism *Friedriech Nietzsche*.<sup>206</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

African youth today are living a type of life that's difficult to call either traditional or modern. The traditional life as it was lived in the olden days is far gone, dead and buried, and we cannot pretend to go back there, for better or for worse. We have to move towards modernity or post modernity, and amidst the challenges that these ages bring, look on how we can preach the risen Christ in these eras full of secularistic and atheistic lifestyles.

We have to admit that modernity has come with its new challenges to the African youth; challenges such as lack of employment, technological advancement, poverty and illiteracy, population boom associated with poor living conditions, among others. The struggle for survival therefore face almost every African youth and therefore the search for the materialistic wellbeing tend to outweigh the spiritual element that's a core to any Christian and ethical life in any society.

Rapid change from traditional to modernity with its materialistic characteristic has brought with it different challenges, among them secularism, that's highly spreading among the contemporary African youth.

We Africans cannot keep on exalting the good religious and traditional values that our forefathers held centuries ago. We must live in the present and take responsibility and dance in the arena of these changes that face us in Africa today.

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<sup>206</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900) was a German Philosopher of the late 19th century and he is normally considered as the prophet of atheism. He challenged the foundations of Christianity and traditional morality and was interested in the enhancement of individual and cultural health. He believed in life, creativity, power and the realities of the world we live in rather than those situated in the world beyond. Cf. "Friedrich Nietzsche" in *The Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 3.

We cannot deny the fact that materialism and worldly values take an upper hand in our contemporary African society, and especially among the youth, and religion and godly values are always pushed to the periphery. The secular perception of reality is everywhere with us in the continent, and there is the growing delusive perception and feeling that we have the total control of the entire reality. God and religion are realities which are not normally part of the daily lives of the African youth, and they (God and Religion) are sought only when the other available means have been consulted. God and religion are not totally excluded, but they are sought only as the last refuge.

The main question here is how we, the church and religious leaders, pastors and priests, can preach Christ or Godly values to the African youth in this context of secularistic values and ideals? The way we answer that question—will definitely determine how we as the church leaders, put the spread of secularism in Africa under control.

There is clear indication that the contemporary African society is no longer religious as it used to be in the traditional set-up. The secular realities have cropped in and if the trend keep its tempo as it is now, then very soon, probably within the coming century or so, the African society will be more secularistic than it is now, and if no appropriate pastoral measures are taken, then African society will start to embrace explicit atheistic beliefs, which will put the whole of our religious attitudes in Africa into a great crisis.

## Chapter III

### 3. Agents of Secularism in Contemporary African society

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#### Introduction

*Globalization, Mass Media and Exchange of Philosophies and Ideologies* are some of the great agents of *secularism* in Africa today, and the youth are the ones who are most affected by these. The young people tend to borrow secularized ideas through media and from philosophies and ideologies that are spreading around the globe and this is mainly enhanced through the process of globalization.

In this chapter, I will concentrate on how globalization, mass media and secularized ideologies and philosophies help in the spread of secularism in Africa. The chapter will begin with making clarification of what globalization is, before it briefly shows the three dimensions which globalization takes namely, economic, political and socio-cultural forms. The chapter will further show how mass media acts as a promoter of secularism in Africa, and finally, I will look at some of the various ideologies and philosophies which have found their way in the African context, and which helps in the spread of secularism in this continent.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Pastoral agents in Africa must therefore be aware that if this trend of the spread of secularism is left unchecked, then the future of our continent will be lacking the necessary religious and Christian values which are necessary for any ethical and moral living in any society. Those religious and ethical values that we have held in Africa for centuries will be definitely overtaken by the secularistic ideals that are being spread in Africa through mass media, exchange of philosophies and ideologies and through globalization.

### 3.1. Globalization as an Agent of Secularism in Africa Today

Today the world has been reduced to a small village, and what happens in whichever corner of the globe, probably might not affect everybody in the world, but news of such events can reach every part of the world within seconds. The world is no longer vast like it was in the time of great sailors like, *Christopher Columbus* and *Vasco da Gama*. The world has become a village, indeed a house where everybody belongs, interacts and exchange values and ideas.

Globalization should be understood in this context of connectedness and mutual exchange of values and ideas. But in most cases, the majority understands globalization only in the perspective of economy, but it's a reality that affects every sphere of our everyday dealings. It's a "pervasive phenomena, a process of planetary interchange that puts in rapport economics, finances, countries, cultures, religion and values."<sup>208</sup> Globalization has its effect in the furthest end of the world, and to the remotest part of the countryside. It has been further understood as "the process and the system of social, political and economic integration of the different parts of the world into a global village."<sup>209</sup>

Globalization has been commonly understood in the context of economy, and its proponents in this context argue that it's a process of progressive integration of national commodities such as capital, finance and currency markets into one global market acting according to universal set of rules. The main campaigners of economic globalization still argue that it is a natural phenomenon which is in-avoidable and evolutionary, and that it brings prosperity and growth for all. They argue that by engaging or participating in globalization, the third world countries can create jobs for their citizens and improve their lives. Its main pillars in this context are technology, trade and policy.<sup>210</sup>

But viewing globalization only from the perspective of economy is a narrow understanding of a wider reality. Globalization also affects culture and religion, science and politics, ideologies and philosophies, and indeed the entire aspect of human life.

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<sup>208</sup> E. ROSANNA, "Youth in Society: Potentials, Possibilities," 34.

<sup>209</sup> E. MAGOTI, "Globalization in Africa," 53.

<sup>210</sup> Cf. E. MAGOTI, "Globalization in Africa," 53 - 54.

Globalization can be said to refer to the process of increasing integration of world economies, financial systems, political ideals, cultural practices and social forces. It's true that globalization has been accelerated through the means of technological advancement in mass communication, and it's through globalization that human interactions have been greatly improved. With globalization, the young people are easily exposed to new ideas, practices and cultural values from other parts of the world. We must acknowledge that not all the new values are compatible with African cultural values, but the old myth that the things that come from abroad are superior to the things local got in Africa is still upheld by many in the African continent.<sup>211</sup>

The African youth are therefore faced with this challenge of different cultures presenting themselves to them with no one to direct them on what to choose. In the Traditional African Society, this was not the case. There was a strict social control and up-bringing among the youth, which definitely have died with the rapid changes sweeping across African society today. "Globalization with its accompanying liberalized electronic and printed mass media has opened new supermarkets of ideals and values from which the youth choose and pick with ease."<sup>212</sup> This new trend "has undermined the role of traditional agents of socialization especially the parents who quite often watch helplessly as their children display strange imported behaviour."<sup>213</sup>

Globalization can therefore be said to refer to the situation in which societies, cultures, politics, economics and all those aspects which exist in the society, have come closer together. It refers to the intensification of social relationships in the world, which makes the societies around the globe to be linked together to the extent that local ideologies and choices are shaped by events which are taking place miles away and vice versa. This act in creating new political, theological, ideological and economic forces, that help in producing new relationships between peoples, states and nations. Globalization is not only characterized and intensified by increase in transfer of goods, services and technology between different nations, but also the effects of social

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<sup>211</sup> Cf. N. W. NDUNG'U, "The Youth and Africa's Culture," 136.

<sup>212</sup> N. W. NDUNG'U, "The Youth and Africa's Culture," 127.

<sup>213</sup> N. W. NDUNG'U, "The Youth and Africa's Culture," 127.

interactions in politics, business, sports, fashion, music, environment, law, gender and cultural identity.<sup>214</sup>

The underlying principle of globalization is uniformity or oneness. It (globalization) campaigns for uniformity in ideas, cultural practices, economy, politics and policies. Africa is being affected seriously by globalization because it seem to have borrowed heavily from outside sources, than what she herself has given to other cultures. The process of globalization which has led to integration and interaction among peoples, institutions, organizations and governments, has affected Africa to its very roots in almost all spheres of life.

Globalization has taken three main dimensions, namely, a) economic dimension, b) political dimension, and c) socio-cultural dimension.

### **3.1.1. Economic Dimension of Globalization**

Economic dimension of globalization refer to increased and intensified production of goods and services, and increased trading and financial exchange between individuals and bodies across the world. This happens mainly through international organizations and multibillion companies.<sup>215</sup>

### **3.1.2. Political Dimension of Globalization**

This is through the increasing number of human associations which influence the governance of the whole world. These human associations are bodies such as International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations (UN), World Bank, World Trade Organizations (WTO), The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development, and the Group of Eight (G8).<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Cf. P. N. MWAURA, "The Impact of Globalization on Women in Kenya," 6.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. "Globalization and Identity: Trends and Contradictions," 1.

<sup>216</sup> Cf. D. BRIAN., "Globalization and its impact on International University Cooperation," 4

### 3.1.3. Socio-Cultural Dimension of Globalization

Socio-Cultural dimension of globalization comprise the exchange of cultural practices between nations and peoples. We can't deny the fact that economic and political globalization has to some extent enhanced the process of socio-cultural dimension of globalization greatly. Television and exchange of ideas through social networking has also enhanced this process greatly. We can therefore say that we have a global culture which changes according to how the people live and act.

### 3.2. Mass Media as an Agent of Secularism in Africa Today

Pope John II, in one of his apostolic letters, *Rapid Development*, acknowledged that media is one of the signs of great development and progress in our modern society and therefore can be used by the agents of evangelization for, a) the spread of the Gospel and religious values, b) for promoting ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, c) for co-operation and creating a society which respect the dignity of the human person and which is attentive to the common good.<sup>217</sup> He acknowledged that media is “a powerful resource for good if used to foster understanding between people, [and] a destructive ‘weapon’ if used to foster injustice and conflicts.”<sup>218</sup>

We cannot deny that media, whether print, electronic or digital can influence society in diverse ways. It can act in a positive way by putting positive values in a society and for the construction of the society, or negatively by advocating for and putting negative values which acts for the destruction of the society.

Pope John Paul II puts it that the mass media has worked in “unifying humanity and transforming it into – as it's commonly referred to – ‘a global Village’.”<sup>219</sup> Other says that the world has become, no-longer a village, but a house and the credit go to mass media.<sup>220</sup> This means that the world has been reduced from its vastness of a globe to a house like entity. We can't deny the fact that the media and communication have acquired such importance “as to be the principal means of guidance and inspiration for

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<sup>217</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter “Rapid Development,” no. 7.

<sup>218</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter “Rapid Development,” no. 11.

<sup>219</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter “Rapid Development,” no.3.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. A. O. OJORE, *Problems of Youth in Africa*, 72.

many people in their personal, familial and social behaviour,<sup>221</sup> and the majority of those affected are the youth.

Pope John Paul II states;

Ours is an age of global communication in which countless moments of human existence are either spent with, or at least confronted by, the different processes of the mass media. I limit myself to mentioning the formation of personality and conscience, the interpretation and structuring of effective relationships, the coming together of the educative and formative phases, the elaboration and diffusion of cultural phenomena, and the development of social, political and economic life.<sup>222</sup>

The reality on the ground shows that the mass media has been used as the promoter of secularism in Africa. “It has been used to corrupt the many unsuspecting African youth. It spreads secularism very fast.”<sup>223</sup> Media influence youth in Africa and help in the spread of secularism in different ways. Some media contents over-emphasize on what they are presenting, like scenes of violence, sex and passion, and still, certain mass communication media encourage deviant behaviour among the youth, who most often imitate actions of the characters.<sup>224</sup>

As we talk today, we cannot fail to say that “television teaches a drug culture, because it present as role models for the youth film stars and pop stars who are notoriously drug addicts.”<sup>225</sup> If we watch the mass media in our continent showing dishonest businessmen and women, who are having loose morals, as the people who are more successful in the society, then we are opting for a sure path to destruction and moral corruption. The young people will definitely borrow such lifestyles, and so, a lifestyle without morals will persist in the society. A society where God and godly values are pushed aside and secular realities with no morals takes the upper hand. Researchers have shown that a quick visit to the video showrooms in our cities and towns in Africa reveal that the majority of those attending or visiting these showrooms are children and the youth. They also say that the films and shows given to the audience in these rooms are

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<sup>221</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter “*Rapid Development*,” 3.

<sup>222</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter “*Rapid Development*,” 3.

<sup>223</sup> A. O. OJORE, *Problems of Youth in Africa*, 72.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. A. O. OJORE, *Problems of Youth in Africa*, 72.

<sup>225</sup> A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 75.

mainly full of violence and pornography, with deviant behaviour such as lesbianism and homosexuality not excluded.<sup>226</sup>

If this is the state of our media in Africa, then we can be sure that the religious and moral future of our continent seems not very bright. All sorts of cultures has been borrowed and incorporated in Africa. Some few decades ago, it was unheard of for anybody to publicly proclaim that he/she is a homosexual or a lesbian, or more, an atheist in our African context. Today the things are different; they publicly campaign for their rights and freely form associations, and indeed advertise their agenda through the print, electronic and digital media. The youth in Africa are faced with this situation and they are presented with the so called ‘variety of values’ to choose from. Things which were in traditional African society considered immoral are passing to be ‘values’ through the continuous advertisement in the media. From another perspective, some scholars have stated that many parents in the name of wealth and love for their children “promote individualism among themselves by spending many hours in front of the television saying nothing to one another.”<sup>227</sup>

Through mass media, “the African culture is no longer pure, it has been polluted and contaminated by the western culture ... [and] the same must be said about moral issues which can no longer stand their ground without the outside influence.”<sup>228</sup> Let’s now see how different types of media escalates the spread of secularism in Africa today

### **3.2.1. Print Media**

When we talk of print media, we are specifically making reference to such means of communication as books, journals, magazines and such like. These are materials which are written down and probably bound together in papers, and used for passing information from one party to another.

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<sup>226</sup> Cf. A. O. OJORE, *Problems of Youth in Africa*, 72-73.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. A. O. OJORE, *Problems of Youth in Africa*, 73.

<sup>228</sup> M. M. THEURI, “Religion and Culture as Factors in the Development of Africa,” 191.

In Africa, this type of media mainly affects the *elites* and *intellectuals* who often tend to keep themselves up-dated with modern trends and happening around the globe.<sup>229</sup> Those who read widely encounter ideologies which are secularistic in nature, or to the extreme, atheistic in nature and content. Even though most of the newspapers in Africa often contain mainly articles which inform on matters of politics, social life or sometimes criticize the media itself, they in themselves are not immune to secular influences because they carry the articles and reports from press agencies which reflect Euro-American outlook, and which contain liberal attitudes which are characteristic of media in general.<sup>230</sup>

We can say that it's true that elites and intellectuals of the African society are the ones who most often get access to newspapers and other written literature, but it will be unrealistic if we tend to think that the youth in primary school, high school and middle level colleges are free from the secularistic influence of print media.

The young readers in Africa have been in most cases faced with what's called "dirty literature"<sup>231</sup> full of violence and pornography. Shorter and Onyancha stated that there have been occasions when parents protested about certain novels that were being included in the list of set-books for literature classes in school curriculum. We can't deny that in the hands of young readers, this literature will definitely offer an opportunity or encouragement towards promiscuous sexual behaviour which in the long run leads to pre-marital pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>232</sup>

The young people in colleges and universities often on their part encounter foreign ideologies full of secularistic thoughts which they incorporate in their lives;

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<sup>229</sup> More of the ideologies will be discussed in the next part of this chapter as we look at the forms of ideologies which are foreign to Africa, and which helps in the spread of secularism among the elites.

<sup>230</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 73.

<sup>231</sup> Shorter and Onyancha used the phrase 'dirty literature' to refer to pornographic literature which most often are sold cheaply to the young readers and act as promoters of deviant behaviors.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 73.

ideologies which they live by and which definitely affect their entire lives as members of the society.<sup>233</sup>

### 3.2.2. Electronic Media

Electronic media refers to the means of communication that uses electronic means such as in radio, television, movies, recorded music, video games among others. The most used in this category of communication in Africa are radio, television and videos.

The most widespread among these means of communication is the radio, which just like the television may play music full of sexual overtones, and it acts as a promoter of consumer products. Most of the broadcasts in radio campaigns for the selling and buying, and almost everything is perceived as a product to be sold and bought. This is one way of promoting consumer materialism, which is the main aspect of secularism in Africa today.<sup>234</sup>

A keen look may reveal that there is a fundamental distinction between radio broadcast and television. With radio, the listeners only make an imaginative response of what they hear. Television on the other hand renders viewers passive and it imposes itself completely on the audience, and when television start to corrupt and degrades, it does so more absolutely.<sup>235</sup>

Television, just like radios also act as a promoter of consumer materialism. Television is no longer a luxury item and it's owned nowadays by almost all the rich and middle-class income earners in the cities, towns and elsewhere in Africa, and majority of African residents nowadays have access to this means of communication. But television not only corrupts and degrades, but also create a world which is not real and where real things no longer matter. Television robs the viewer a critical mind and response to those events that ought to make profound and great impression. Mostly in Africa, television reflects a culture which is not only secular, but also alien.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Some of these ideologies will be dealt with separately as we look at the second part of this paper that deals with foreign ideologies which acts as catalyst for secularistic ideals in Africa.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 84.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 84.

<sup>236</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 72-74.

Television in Africa, as elsewhere, is also the instrument and voice of *economism*. Economic issues and meanings predominate, and the medium is a major instrument of globalization and cultural homogeneity. To watch television is to enter an ideal world which has little to do with real Africa, but which instantly becomes a pattern to follow, a goal to be realized.<sup>237</sup>

Video programmes also show and reflect those alien and secularistic cultures as other electronic media does. These are common not only in the African cities and towns, but also finding their way in the remotest parts of the rural areas of the continent.

### 3.2.2.1. Electronic Media and Consumer Materialism

It's a fact that electronic media, acts as a campaigning tool for consumer materialism in Africa. Their primary concern is not the well-being and the proper upbringing of young people, but making viewers and listeners interested in their products, and they promote a world view based on craving and dissatisfaction.<sup>238</sup> Electronic media initiates the viewers into a philosophy of consumer materialism and economic rationalism. Materialism and economism therefore replaces God and religion. What we have in the society is what we call, 'the worship of what is not God'. Some of the basic elements of consumer materialism and economism are alcohol and drugs.<sup>239</sup>

Electronic media is just about money and control. Whichever thing that they touches, be it news, sports, entertainment, education among others, project purely the image and tenets of secular consumer materialism, and it often obeys the rules of economic rationalism.<sup>240</sup>

The young people in Africa are caught up in materialism and there is a moral vacuum that exist in the souls of the youth.<sup>241</sup> Many of the young people in this situation of craving and dissatisfaction created by media, resort to any means at their disposal to achieve material gains.

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<sup>237</sup> A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 74-75.

<sup>238</sup> B. SWIMME, *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos; Humanity and the New Story*, 16-17.

<sup>239</sup> J. WIJNGAARDS, "Can We Regain Control of TV?" 260-263.

<sup>240</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 75.

<sup>241</sup> Cf. E. ACHERMANN, *Cry Beloved Africa, a Continent Need Help*, 17.

### **3.2.2.2. Electronic Media and Violence**

Violence also exists in the print media, but it's through the electronic media that the viewers and listeners are seriously impacted by the contents of what they see and hear. Most of the programmes broadcast by these media, there is violence, be it newscast, soap operas and commercials, video games, cartoons, documentaries among others. From the youngest age, the youth in Africa are being taught by the media to respond violently to every obstacle and to every problem. This view has been shared by social commentators, researchers, parents, pastoral workers and Christian pastors.<sup>242</sup>

From this perspective, we can not only argue that media is an agent of violence, but we can also say that it portrays the society in which such violent scenes originate, even though sometimes media tend to exaggerate scenes beyond the real life situations.

### **3.2.2.3. Electronic Media, Pornography and Sexual Immorality**

The films and videos reflect the mores and society from which they come. Some cultures portray sex as a major public preoccupation. In some cultures and contexts such as the Western culture, everyone is perceived to have a right to sexual activity so long as it does no harm to others. Scenes portraying nakedness and obscene bedroom affairs including sexual deviations such as homosexuality and lesbianism are part of these films, and are nowadays found in the African society. There is also a lot of sex in the commercials shown in electronic media in Africa.<sup>243</sup>

We must take into consideration that today in Africa, parents and teachers rarely talk of sex to the youth, and the lack of proper guidance and counselling lead the young people to search for information regarding sex in other sources and electronic media, pornographic literature. These sources act as available tools from which young people get this information.<sup>244</sup> These only lead the young people to engage in sexual promiscuity, not taking into account all the risks involved in regard to health and character.

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<sup>242</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 77.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 78.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. N. W. NDUNG'U, "The Youth and Africa's Culture," 131.

Video business is also a booming business in African society and in most of our towns and cities, pornographic films begins at 8pm, and there is no age restriction to people attending these videos. Even children are exposed to pornographic materials as early as age ten or even less, and the erotic scenes and violence which they see in these videos are nothing to compare with what they watch in television screens at home. The electronic media helps to promote of values which are contradictory to the gospel values.<sup>245</sup>

#### **3.2.2.4. Media and Anti-Religious Bias**

Media in Africa as we talk today has connections with other media productions everywhere around the globe. Media generally shows some biasness against religion in general and Christianity in particular, and some scholars have pointed out that this hostility towards religion is a characteristic of worldwide secularism. This biasness against religion which is more explicit in the western media broadcasting, is also affecting television production in Africa.<sup>246</sup>

The biasness of the media towards religion takes the rationalistic approach in trying to explain some basic tenets of our faith; for example, many media productions will argue that faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus is incompatible with scientific world-view.<sup>247</sup>

At times, no Easter passes without the media trying to indulge itself in endless and futile arguments based on new interpretation of some religious beliefs and facts. The fact is that there is a lot of prejudice when it comes to reporting things related to religion. Media most often takes a stand that only encourages moral relativism and defends the secular society. From the perspective of secular media productions, there is little if no interest in religious truths or in the validity of religious worship and morality as such. Its interest is in ‘stories’ which are newsworthy and saleable, especially those which are sensational.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup>Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 80-81.

<sup>246</sup>Cf. J. WIJNGAARDS, “Can We Regain Control of TV?” 261-262.

<sup>247</sup>Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 82.

<sup>248</sup>Cf. A. SHORTER – E. ONYANCHA, *Secularism in Africa, a Case Study: Nairobi City*, 83.

What marks the bottom line in the media production is the commercial factor, the consumer materialism and the philosophy of economism, and anything that cannot give such economic benefits in return must be put aside. Anything religious can only be given a good presentation if it brings economic benefit to the producers, and in most cases they are in negative sense, trying to destroy faith and belief, for instance the film that was produced some years ago called *The Da Vinci Code*.<sup>249</sup>

### 3.2.3. Digital Media

Traditionally, digital media has been classified under the category of electronic media. But slowly as time goes by and as technology advances, it is breaking away from the electronic media and is forming a territory of its own as a means of communication, or as a means of passing information from one party to another. Examples of digital media are internet, electronic books, electronic commerce, and social networking sites in the web, computers, cellular phones, digital videos, and interactive media among others. With globalization and the advancement of the modern technology, I can argue that the youth, regardless of where they are practically infatuated with the so called *digital media*.

The young people of the world, and Africa is not excluded, are crazy with I.T., (Information Technology) with a special reference to the computer and the internet. This can be attributed to the process of globalization where each and every culture tries to borrow something technological from the global market, and incorporate them in their specific culture depending on the environment in which different people live. African societies are not left behind in this.

Youth in Africa are trying to update themselves in communication and media technologies such as the world-wide web, instant messaging, text messaging, MP3 players, cellular phones and You-tube. The social networking sites like face-book, my-space and twitter may sometimes explain the youth reputation for being somewhat peer oriented due to easier facilitation of communication through technology.

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<sup>249</sup> The *Da Vinci Code* was a 2003 mystery detective novel written by *Dan Brown*, investigating the possibility of *Jesus* having been married to *Mary Magdalene*. It was later made into a film in 2006, directed by *Ron Howard* and the screen player was *Akiva Goldman*. The stars in the film were, *Tom Hawk*, *Audrey Tautau* and *Jean Reno*. “The Da Vinci Code (2006)”, 2

A visit to any cyber café within our towns and cities in Africa will show how many young African people are, '*mad*' or totally attached to the internet. They take a lot of their time watching or downloading movies from the internet, posting articles clips in the 'you-tube' or in contact with total strangers through the use of the face-book and other means.

Another aspect that is very delicate with the use of technology, especially the internet, is the temptation of doing much *navigation* which always leads our young people to nasty sites like the pornographic sites. Once one young man told me that prostitution as one of the oldest world profession has gone digital, and he was right. There are always young women and men on the wait '*on the web cameras*' to do everything provided you meet their demands, that is, provided you pay for their services. That means money takes upper hand than any other thing in life.

A cyber-café attendant once told me that despite the fact that they have put a notice that reads, '*No Visit to Pornographic Sites*', young people still visit these sites and there is no way they can prevent them because if they do so, then they will lose a considerable number of customers. Some of the customers to these cyber cafes go there almost naked and they communicate to total strangers (people) who are far away though the '*google talk*' connected with '*web-cam cameras*' and these people sometimes appear in the screen totally or partially naked, and sometimes they are engaging in immoral activities either with people or with animals. Many youth in Africa no longer consider Christian values and ethics as the guiding principles of their lives.

A visit to any tertiary institution of learning in Africa will give you a brief picture of how our African youths live. How they try all their best to be updated with the modern technology. I presume that more than half of the students in the universities and colleges in Africa own a computer. That's a very good sign of academic and intellectual pursuit, because any serious academic work will be incomplete without a computer, especially in regard to matters that pertains to research-work in tertiary level institutions of learning. But I only wish that these computers were specifically used for their intended purposes. Digital media act as promoter of secularism in different ways in our African society by

spreading un-Christian values among the youth, and promoting consumer materialism in the sense that everything in the digital media act as a commodity to be sold or bought.

### **3.3. Exchange of Philosophies and Ideologies**

An ideology can mean modes of thinking and acting, systems of values and symbolic codes which give a group some cultural unity.<sup>250</sup> In other words, ideology can still mean a pattern of belief or mental disposition to explain a complex reality. The word ideology can also be used to refer to a shared belief of a group of people, for example a nation, a sect of religion or a group of theorists. It further refers to the way individuals think about their world and their ideal concept on how to live that world.<sup>251</sup> Philosophy on the other hand is the set of beliefs or thinking patterns by which a group or a society orders reality so as to make it intelligible.<sup>252</sup>

With globalization in our African context today, philosophies and ideologies are not restricted to a particular or specific region of the world. There are constant exchanges of ideas and philosophies and some of these philosophies and ideologies are devoid of any religious imperatives, and therefore only campaigns for secularistic ideas. Some of these philosophies and ideologies are: a) Machiavellianism, b) Marxism, and c) Capitalism among others.

#### **3.3.1. Machiavellianism**

Machiavellianism is a political philosophy or ideology formulated by an Italian political thinker known as *Niccolo Machiavelli*<sup>253</sup> (1469-1527). Part of his philosophy can be summarized as *'the end justifies the means'*. By this he meant that when a leader is in power, he can use any means, good or bad to hold onto his power, and according to

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<sup>250</sup> Cf. S. SPERA, "Ideology," 491.

<sup>251</sup> Cf. "What is Ideology", in *Wise Geek, clear answers for common questions*, 2.

<sup>252</sup> Cf. "Ideology" in *Dictionary.com*, 1.

<sup>253</sup> *Niccolo Machiavelli* was the principal political advisor of the Prince of Florence. He lived between 1469 to 1527 and he was one of the influential political thinkers of that time; Cf. F. OCHIENG-ODHIAMBO, *Hand-Book on Some Social Political Philosophers*, 25.

Machiavelli, a ruler can do evil-acts in-order to make sure that he keeps hold of his power.<sup>254</sup>

According to Machiavelli, if the Prince wants to maintain his power, then he must be prepared not to be virtuous, and he has to make use of this or not according to need.<sup>255</sup>

Machiavelli stated as follows in one of his master pieces, *The Prince*:

I know that everyone will agree that it would be most laudable if a prince possessed all the qualities deemed to be good [...] but, because of conditions in the world, princes cannot have these qualities, or observe them completely. So a prince has of necessity to be so prudent that he knows how to escape evil reputation attached to these vices which could lose him his state, and how to avoid those vices which are not so dangerous, if he possibly can; but, if he cannot, he need not worry so much about the latter. And then, he must not flinch from being blamed for vices which are necessary for safeguarding the state. This is because, taking everything into account, he will find that some of the things that appear to be virtuous will, if he practices them, ruin him, and some of the things that appear to be vices will bring him security and prosperity.<sup>256</sup>

From this perspective, the natural law and morality has very little place in political life. The political leader needs to venture into vice to keep his power. According to Machiavelli, virtue is everything that helps a ruler achieve effective governance regardless of moral, philosophical or theological restraints. This was to help him implement his political theory and to make the political life autonomous.

For Machiavelli, “the only sin consists of failure to achieve political power [...and] a wise ruler will eliminate those who assisted him in gaining his superior position, for those persons will know the evil techniques employed by the ruler and could be a threat to his dominion.”<sup>257</sup>

Machiavellianism maintains that a leader must have the qualities of a fox to outwit his enemies. A leader must appear to have the following virtues: mercy, faith, integrity, humanity and religion. But it is not necessary that he possess the above mentioned qualities, but he must give a convincing impression that he is virtuous.<sup>258</sup> According to Machiavelli, the State must be seen to be above any other form of law and therefore all laws including human rights may be violated in order to govern the State.

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<sup>254</sup> Cf. W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 121.

<sup>255</sup> Cf. N. MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince*, 50.

<sup>256</sup> N. MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince*, 50 -51.

<sup>257</sup> W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 121-122.

<sup>258</sup> Cf. W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 122.

According to him, a political leader can promise anything as long as the promises would help him to regain or attain power. Sincerity and honesty are therefore not important in politics.<sup>259</sup>

Machiavelli “relegated religion and morality to a subordinate and insignificant position to the theory and practice of politics.”<sup>260</sup> The ruler should be outside the law, and if law enacts morality, he is as well outside the morality.<sup>261</sup>

It is rather evident that *Adolf Hitler* in Germany and *Joseph Stalin* in Russia employed Machiavellianism form of politics in their brute form of governance, and many African head of states, has used this political theory in their form of governance.

Society must be guided by some form of ethics and morality. If these philosophies and ideologies, like the one mentioned, *Machiavellianism*, are spreading in Africa, it’s definitely true that Africans, especially the young generations are absorbing these philosophies and ideologies. Machiavellianism which states that in governance, the end justifies the means is penetrating not only the field of politics, but also economics, religion and other spheres of life in Africa.

### **3.3.2. Neo-Liberal Capitalism**

Capitalism comes from the word capital and it has different meanings like, a) material means of production, b) financial resources as a means of production, c) human resources or human capital, and finally d) social capital or collective investment.

Neo-liberal capitalism is an economic system where the means of production can be privately owned or can be privately controlled, but there are a percentage of shares that belongs to the government. Capitalism is contrasted to socialism in the sense that in capitalism, individuals own entire means of production, and the supporters of capitalism encourage individual investments,<sup>262</sup> while in socialism, means of production are communally owned. Neo-liberal capitalism has the following elements as the main

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<sup>259</sup> Cf. F. OCHIENG-ODHIAMBO, *Hand-Book on Some Social Political Philosophers*, 29.

<sup>260</sup> F. OCHIENG-ODHIAMBO, *Hand-Book on Some Social Political Philosophers*, 28.

<sup>261</sup> F. OCHIENG-ODHIAMBO, *Hand-Book on Some Social Political Philosophers*, 28.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. P. ESCOBAR, “The Collapse of Neo Liberal Capitalism”, 2

component of its doctrine: a) Private ownership of means of production, b) pursuit of self-interest and profit, c) free market mechanism, and d) privatization.

### **3.3.2.1. Private Ownership of Means of Production**

The private ownership of the means of production is where the entire means of production is privately owned and controlled. It is the owning assets and properties with an aim of generating the profit. The pursuit of profit marks the negative aspect of private ownership of the means of production, because it can lead to the pursuit of the profit forgetting the wellbeing of the consumers and of the entire society.

### **3.3.2.2. The Pursuit of Self-Interest and Profit**

Here every individual and every society are free to pursue their own interest, and working to serve the common good of the society has nothing or little space in it.

### **3.3.2.3. Free Market Mechanism**

Free market mechanism is a system where economic decisions takes place on voluntary basis, free of coercive influence. Economic decisions in this sense refer to the transfer of money, goods and services, and every industry has the right to decide, a) how much to sell its products, and b) where to sell these products. The government has no authority to control the prices. In a free market system, the traders are free to compare and choose when and where they sell and buy their goods and services as long as they are within the juridical framework laid by the government.<sup>263</sup>

### **3.3.2.4. Privatization**

This is the removal of industry or firm from the public sector or government ownership to private or individual sector. In other words, we can say that it is the transfer of national owned companies or factories, from public sector to private sector.<sup>264</sup>

In socialist societies or systems, many firms and factories are owned by the government, but in capitalistic systems and societies, factories and industries are owned by individuals. The advantages of privatization are that, it stimulates creativity, efficiency and initiative, but it also has disadvantages in that there may be unjust means to achieve

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<sup>263</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 15.

<sup>264</sup> Cf. C. PASS - al., *Collins Dictionary, Business III*, 42.

its intended goals of making/maximizing profit. These unjust means can be for example, increase in prices, under-pay of the workers, prolonged working hours among other things. This is the application of Machiavellianism to economic system.

### **3.3.3. Marxism**

Marxism is a political and economic doctrine which rose from the minds of great philosophers *Karl Heinrich Marx*<sup>265</sup> (1818-1883), *Friedrich Engels* (1820-1895) and *Nicolai Lenin* (1870-1924), and it can be considered as a philosophical method of tackling practically and theoretically, the fundamental problems of existence and transformation, the problems that touch on the social, political and economic spheres. The basic teaching of Marxism is that history is a series of struggle between classes of society for economic power. The rich and the poor, those who have the means of production, and those who don't have the means of production, and the desire for control of material wealth underlies all class struggle.<sup>266</sup> Marxism advocates for a classless society.

Marxism as a political theory comprise of the following elements: a) it involves conflict and class struggle, b) its atheistic, and c) it is materialistic in nature.

#### **3.3.3.1. Conflict and Class Struggle**

Marxism advocates for conflict and the class struggle as a means of achieving a classless society. Marx maintained that there should be violent revolutions to help the

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<sup>265</sup> Karl Heinrich Marx was a German political philosopher who lived at the beginning of industrial revolution, and he lived in an environment where capitalists/employers were exploiting the laborers. The employers were giving their employees a very minimum wages despite the fact that employees were overworked. He stated that no one should employ another for the sake of making profit. Karl Marx, together with his friend Friedrich Engels wrote *Communist Manifesto* (1848), where they advocated for the idea of class struggle as a means to overthrow the capitalists (Bourgeoisie) by the employees (proletariats). The change has to come through class struggle and the working class would overthrow the capitalists so that they create a classless society characterized by communal ownership of property. Cf. W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 247-250.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 246-247.

overthrowing the capitalists and the exploiters, and to establish the rule of the proletariats. The capitalists therefore have to be eliminated through violent means.<sup>267</sup>

### 3.3.3.2. Atheism

Marxism holds that *religion is the opium of the poor*. It maintains that “morality is contingent upon the social class, and the social class together with its corresponding moral code is in turn the product of the mode of production.”<sup>268</sup>

Marxists reject religious doctrines claiming that religious values, the soul, immortality and God are just illusions, and that the illusionary happiness based on religion must be condemned.<sup>269</sup>

Karl Marx taught:

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of the spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. God does not create man; rather, man creates invalid religion with its mythical God. Religion function as a police force, as a bourgeoisie technique to dissuade the masses from revolting by promising them a better, happier existence after death than their exploiters allow them to enjoy during their lifetime on earth.<sup>270</sup>

Even though his reaction was towards distorted religion of his time, his theories and ideas remain. Study of Marx reveals that his atheistic philosophy originated from his reaction against Hegelian philosophy which asserted that the spiritual is the reality. Marx on his part wanted to assure people that the material is the real, not the ideal.

### 3.3.3.3. Materialism

In his materialism, Marx ignored all the spiritual powers and realities. He ignored God and religion that could influence and guide the world from outside. He maintained that the mode of production of material goods determines all the spheres of life, be it religious, social, political, intellectual and all the institutions of all the people in all the ages of history. He further maintained that those who own means of production control

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<sup>267</sup> Cf. as quoted by, W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the present*, 250.

<sup>268</sup> W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 251.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 251.

<sup>270</sup> W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 251.

the entire population and society including their moral and religious ideas, and the people's outlook of social and intellectual reality.<sup>271</sup>

### **3.3.4. Other Secularistic and Atheistic Ideologies Influencing the African Youth**

Apart from the above mentioned secularistic and atheistic philosophies and ideologies, there are also other secularistic ideologies which are spreading in the African continent and are seriously influencing the African youth.

One among these ideologies is the one discussed by *Auguste Comte* and *Herbert Spencer* who understood religion as a transitory stage in the cultural development. Religion according to them is the first and the lowest stage in the evolution of any human culture and this evolution of human culture progress through stages namely, religious, metaphysical and positive stage. The highest in this evolution is the positive stage where only two ways of human inquiry and knowledge are accepted as valid. These are: a) deductive method of mathematics and logic; and b) inductive method of science. When cultures reach the positive stage, then the other two stages becomes irrelevant and therefore loses their place within the societal set-up.<sup>272</sup>

Another ideology is that of natural sciences which tend to side-line religion, arguing that everything should be qualified using the empirical data. It states that the structure of human society and the behaviour of individuals living in such societies can be clearly elaborated using the scientific method. They state that scientific ethics and sociology will soon take the place and function of religion. From this perspective, the truth and confidence in sciences will be an adequate substitute of the compelling and obliging authority of God. *Sigmund Freud* argued that religion compels people to suppress or control natural drives like sex, considered by conventional religious standards as indecent. In this way, the religious people end up in a 'universal obsessional neurosis'.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Cf. W. S. SAHAKIAN, *History of Philosophy, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 248.

<sup>272</sup> Cf. I. KLINGER – C. RIMIRU, *Philosophy, Science and God*, 97

<sup>273</sup> Cf. I. KLINGER – C. RIMIRU, *Philosophy, Science and God*, 97

Another typical philosophy that helps in the spread of secularism in Africa is that of *J. P. Sartre*. His thinking can be summarized as follows.

Sartre stated that existentialism is not atheist in the sense that it would not exhaust itself in the demonstration of the existence of God. It declares, rather, that even if God existed that would make no difference from its point of view. He states that the real problem is not that of existence of God; what man needs is to find himself again and to understand that nothing can save him from himself, not even a valid proof of the existence of God.<sup>274</sup>

The above position is a typical example of practical secularism. Whether God exists or not does not matter. What matters is our own existence and how we live it here and now. This argument of *J. P. Sartre* resembles that of *Julian Huxley*, who states that “man must cease being afraid of his uniqueness, and must not continue to put off the responsibilities that are really his own on the shoulders of mythical gods...”<sup>275</sup>

These thinkers argue that human beings have to accept full responsibility of their world, their future, and themselves. They argue that there is no objective value and therefore there cannot be any authority reinforcing such values, whether natural authorities like family, society or state, or supernatural authority such as God. There are also other ideologies of the type as above mentioned which are influencing our African youth. Ideologies such as, a) that of *Friedrich Nietzsche* who is considered as the prophet of atheism, b) of *Arthur Schopenhauer* considered as the father of modern atheism and c) *Charles Darwin*,<sup>276</sup> among others, ideologies which are challenging the traditional known concepts of God and religion, and which are being absorbed by our young generation in Africa today.

The books containing and advocating atheistic thoughts and beliefs such as the *God Delusion* written by *Richard Dawkins*, and the *Atheist Manifesto* written by *Michel Onfray*, among others, are finding their way into the African market and the atheistic thoughts contained in them are being absorbed into the minds of young African people.

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<sup>274</sup> J. P. SARTRE, *Existentialism and Humanism*, 56.

<sup>275</sup> J. COLLINS, *Crossroad in Philosophy*, 175

<sup>276</sup> Cf. I. KLINGER – C. RIMIRU, *Philosophy, Science and God*, 117-120.

## Concluding Remarks

We would be biased if we were to see globalization only in the negative sense. We have to admit that it is through globalization that the world, and Africa in particular has opened up to other countries and cultures, and most African States must appreciate that it's through globalization that Africa has come to know the good democracies of the Western world. It's also through globalization that new ideas and findings are exchanged to enhance better living in different parts of the globe.

But must African youth assimilate everything they encounter in this process of global exchange? Definitely not, good values should be taken and negative values abandoned. The other question, should African youth shed off their traditional heritage so that they give room to the modern situation? "The man of Africa must get up and dance, for better or for worse, on the arena of world drama. His image of himself and of his [traditional] universe is [has been] disrupted and [he] must make room for the changing 'universal' and not simply [be a] tribal man."<sup>277</sup>

It's true that our African youth, despite the difficult moments they are undergoing both economically and socially, have to keep themselves at the same level with the rest of other young people in different parts of the world, and if possible, also contribute to the modern technological advancement so that the rest of the world can also borrow something from African youth.

But the young people in African must know that, these modern technological gadgets should be used with a lot of prudence towards their main intended purposes so that we cannot fall prey, be an experimental zone or a dumping site to these gadgets, and secondly, we must take a lot of caution so that the new technologies, philosophies, and ideologies should not corrupt the minds of our African young people, to the extent that these young people lose their identity, values and dignity as African people.

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<sup>277</sup> J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 217.

## Chapter IV

### 4. Evangelization Strategies among the Youth in the Contemporary African Society

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#### Introduction

Pope Benedict XVI described secularism as a modern day heresy in our midst and a tyrant among us. This is due to the increasing marginalisation of religion and Christianity in particular. He argues that there are those who would advocate that the voice of religion be silenced or be subjected or negated to the negative or purely private sphere.<sup>278</sup>

In this chapter, I will discuss the various possible evangelization strategies that can be used among the youth in the contemporary African society threatened by secularism and its ideals. This chapter will tackle sub-topics such as: a) Evangelization of the Youth within the Family Set-Up, b) Pastoral Care of the Youth within the Parish Environment, c) Evangelization within the Schools and Institutions of Higher Learning, d) Youth for Youth and Active Youth Evangelization, and finally, d) Mass Media as a Means of Evangelization.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Cf. D. MACPHERSON, “Secularism: Pope Benedict Has Hit the Mark,” 37.

<sup>279</sup> *Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga*, the then Archbishop of Nairobi-Kenya, on the occasion of Youth Challenge Week in Nairobi between 6<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> Aril 1986 exhorted the adults not to prevent the young people from approaching Christ, but with the way of their lifestyles and encouraging words, lead the youth to meet their challenges in life by knowing and learning the whole truth, and accordingly, living it out in charity and justice. Cf. S. ADELMO, ed., *Youth on the Move with Christ, Youth Challenge Week*, 7.

## **4.1. Evangelization of the Youth within the Family Set-Up**

The family “is the ‘sanctuary of life’ and a vital cell of society and the Church. It is here that the features of a people take shape; it is here that its members acquire basic teachings.”<sup>280</sup> It is in the family that people learn to know the face of God as much as they receive it from their parents and from those responsible of their formation. Any improper formation within the family will therefore lead to disordered Characters and the end result is that the whole society will suffer violence and other forms of un-becoming behaviours, and that is why the family need to be protected and defended.<sup>281</sup>

For us to combat the prevalent wave of secularism hitting the African society today, the family must become a privileged place for evangelical witness, a true domestic church and a community in which we have a close and intimate dialogue with God.<sup>282</sup> It is in the family that we must cultivate values that are necessary for the moral development of the youth knowing that the young people are both the present and the future of humanity, and the values that they learn in their tender age will help them to be God’s faithful people and responsible members of the society in which they belong.

### **4.1.1. Education within the Family**

The Christian family is in fact “the first community called to announce the Gospel to the human person during growth and to bring him or her through progressive education and catechesis, to full human and Christian maturity.”<sup>283</sup>

The right and duty of parents to give education is essential, since its connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is irreplaceable and inalienable and, therefore, incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others.<sup>284</sup>

In the modern world threatened by secularism, individualism and selfishness, parents have the role and responsibility to enrich their children with sense of true justice

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<sup>280</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 42.

<sup>281</sup> Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 42.

<sup>282</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*”, 92.

<sup>283</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter “*Familiaris Consortio*”, 36.

<sup>284</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter “*Familiaris Consortio*”, 36.

which lead to the respect of personal dignity of each individual. Each and every family, in Africa in particular, must consider itself as the first and fundamental school of social living.<sup>285</sup> Parents must ensure that their children, both adolescent and the young people are properly taught on how to enter into a healthy relationship with God.<sup>286</sup> Any educative activity outside the family must therefore be subjected to parents' acceptance and it must not substitute, but support the Christian education within the family.<sup>287</sup>

Each and every Christian family in Africa should ensure that it properly instruct its members in faith, and the belief that human progress in science and technology can take the place of religion, and that religion belongs to childhood of humanity must be dealt with in a proper manner. The family as an institution has the role to make its members understand that life is not only physical and material, but human being created in the image and likeness of God has the capacity to transcend beyond the material aspect to the creator, God.

The thinking that derives its roots from enlightenment period, and that propose that human beings must throw away the shackles of religion in order for him/her to be truly human must be rejected at all cost. The family as the basic institution in the society and the first school of human learning must always educate its members in the light of faith, and ensure that the secularistic ideals do not penetrate the minds of its members, and of course the members of the society.

#### **4.1.2. Catechesis within the Family**

The family, just like the Church, “ought to be a place where the gospel is transmitted and from which the gospel radiates. In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized.”<sup>288</sup> In this situation, “the parents not only communicate the gospel to their children, but from their children, they can themselves receive the same gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family

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<sup>285</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter “*Familiaris Consortio*”, 37.

<sup>286</sup> Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE FAMILY, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 53.

<sup>287</sup> Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE FAMILY, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 113.

<sup>288</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter “*Familiaris Consortio*”, 52.

becomes the evangelizer of many other families and of the neighbourhood of which it form part.”<sup>289</sup>

The absolute need for family catechesis emerges with particular force in certain situations that the Church unfortunately experiences: in places where anti-religious legislation endeavours even to prevent education in the faith and in the places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible, ‘the Church of the home’ [family] remain the one place where children and young people can receive and authenticate catechesis.<sup>290</sup>

Catechesis as performed by Christian parents is in itself original and irreplaceable, and the families must ensure that they educate their children in a way that each one may perform his/her role according to the vocation received from God. The parents’ ministry of evangelization and catechesis should continue not only during the early ages of their children’s development but also during adolescence and youth when most of the children, as it often happen, sometimes challenges or reject the faith, Christian faith, which they received in early years.<sup>291</sup>

If the catechesis within the family is well and properly done, then the values that the members of the family learn in their early stages will help them live a healthy life within the society, issues such as un-belief which sometimes comes when students reach the higher institutions of learning, and when they meet secularistic and atheistic ideologies and philosophies can be easily dealt with if the young people were well trained in catechesis during their early days. The family catechesis will also help in fighting individualism, and members living in the society will be proud to recognize their traditional solidarity in which individuals affirm that ‘I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am’. The family in this sense will therefore act as a model to the young people, and amidst the challenges that the family experiences in the modern day, the African youth can still stand-up in their moral integrity and put their trust and hope in the Lord God.

Religious values will therefore permeate all the spheres of our lives, and we will be able to proudly witness the risen Christ in whichever place in which we finds ourselves, be it urban or rural.

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<sup>289</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter “*Familiaris Consortio*”, 36.

<sup>290</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation “*Catechesi Tradendae*”, 68,

<sup>291</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter “*Familiaris Consortio*”, 53.

### 4.1.3. Pastoral Care to the Families

The family as an institution needs the assistance of the entire ecclesial community and of its pastors for it to have a better stand to evangelize itself and for the good upbringing of its members.<sup>292</sup> The most difficult moment when the family needs the help of the ecclesial community and its pastors are:

The children's adolescence, which can be disturbed, rebellious and sometimes stormy; the children's marriage, which take them away from their family; lack of understanding or lack of love on the part of those held most dear; abandonment by one of the spouses, or his or her death, which brings the painful experience of widowhood, or the death of a family member, which breaks up and deeply transforms the original family nucleus.<sup>293</sup>

If such issues are not professionally handled in the light of Christian faith, then the young members of the family might end up losing their faith or trust in God, and such might lead to the situation where faith is abandoned and every reality in life is perceived from a secular perspective.

Pastoral agents must also be aware of the situations which might take young people away from faith. Immediate example can be that of mixed marriages, where one spouse is a Catholic and the other a non-Catholic. In such situations, "effort should be made to establish cordial cooperation between the Catholic and the non-Catholic minister from the time that preparation begins for the marriage and the wedding ceremony."<sup>294</sup> We have to admit on the other hand that such cooperation might sometimes prove a bit difficult, but that is where we need the expertise of the Catholic minister.

Today in many parts of the world and in Africa in particular, there are a growing number of marriages between Catholics and non-baptised persons. Sometimes in such cases, the non-baptised professes a different religion, but in many other such marriages, especially in more secularised societies, the person who is not baptised normally professes no religion at all.<sup>295</sup> It will therefore be the responsibility of the pastors or

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<sup>292</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter "*Familiaris Consortio*", 53.

<sup>293</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter "*Familiaris Consortio*", 77.

<sup>294</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter "*Familiaris Consortio*", 78.

<sup>295</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter "*Familiaris Consortio*", 78.

pastoral agents to ensure that such unions bring forth children in the light of Christian faith amid all the challenges that might be there.

Other areas which the pastoral agents need to take very seriously in the ministry to the family are situations like, a) trial marriages, b) de-facto free unions – unions without any publicly recognised institutional bond, neither religious, civil nor traditional, c) Catholics in civil marriages, d) separated or divorced persons who have not remarried, e) divorced who have remarried, among others. The pastors must at all times try to bring such unions to the sacrament of matrimony, bearing in mind that it's through the sacramentally contracted marriages that God's graces and blessings are experienced the most.<sup>296</sup>

Pastoral agents must ensure that they are close to the members of the family at the most difficult moments of their lives. Such difficult moments must not lead to non-attendance of Church or abandonment of faith, but instead, an opportunity to see the face of God amidst all the difficult moments and challenges of our lives.

#### **4.2. Pastoral Care of the Youth within the Parish Environment<sup>297</sup>**

It's in the parish that those entrusted with the role of pastoral care, especially the pastor or the parish priest as the proper shepherd of the parish entrusted to him, ensure that he carries out the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing the people under his care with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christ faithful.<sup>298</sup> The laity is also called to actively contribute to the life

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<sup>296</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter "*Familiaris Consortio*", 79-84.

<sup>297</sup> "A Parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor." Cf. THE CANON LAW SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, *The Canon Law Letter and Spirit*, can. 515. The parishes are therefore by their very nature the ordinary places where the Christian faithful worship and live their Christian lives. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "*Ecclesia in Africa*", 100. It's in the parish that faith is deepened and strengthened, and it's through the parishes that we mature our Christian faith as received from the family and from those who were responsible for our initial Christian upbringing

<sup>298</sup> THE CANON LAW SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, *The Canon Law Letter and Spirit*, can. 517.

and activity of the Church and share responsibilities for the life of the Church with pastors and the Parish staff.<sup>299</sup>

The parish priest must ensure that some of his functions such as catechesis are at times delegated to the lay people who have been properly and doctrinally trained, and who are faithfully living the Christian life. In such circumstances, the parish priest must ensure that he keeps in continuous personal touch with these lay people with whom such works of catechesis is entrusted.<sup>300</sup> Pope John Paul II, affirmed on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1981, on his homily during the *World Day of Prayer for Vocations* that, “there is no doubt that the Church depends on the members of every community as a whole, on the common apostolate, in particular on the apostolate of the laity.”<sup>301</sup> The lay people entrusted with the role of catechesis must ensure that they dedicate their energy to this end.

A lot of care and attention should be given to the young people in this parish set-up during the moment of catechesis, to ensure that they do not become so worldly in their views and thinking, and to ensure that all the secularistic elements and ideologies are not left to penetrate their minds and thoughts. From time to time, there should be a refresher and renewal courses within the parish for the young people to enkindle the spirit of catechesis given to them in their tender ages, and also to enrich and strengthen their Christian faith and to ensure that the young people are steadily growing in faith.

The youth should be encouraged to join Christian movements and associations within the parish. In these movements and associations, “the lay faithful truly finds a privileged opportunity to be the ‘leaven in the dough (cf. Mt. 13: 33),”<sup>302</sup> and this normally happens “especially in areas concerned with administrative of temporal goods according to God’s plan and the struggle for the promotion of human dignity, justice and peace”<sup>303</sup> and also for the integration of faith.

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<sup>299</sup> “Role of the Parish Pastoral Council,” in <<http://www.stisidore-yubacity.org.pdf>> (08-03-2012; 09:54)

<sup>300</sup> Cf. CONGREGATION OF THE CLERGY, “The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community”, 20.

<sup>301</sup> S. O’BYRNE, *A Priest Forever, John Paul II*, 168.

<sup>302</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*”, 101.

<sup>303</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*”, 101.

If such plans and programmes are well organised, then the young people will properly find their place within the big ecclesial community, and the beliefs such as consumer materialism will find it difficult to penetrate the minds of the youth. Let us let our young people not to become so secular, and with the help of pastoral agents who are properly trained and with the help of God, this is a realizable dream.

### **4.3. Evangelization within Schools and Institutions of Higher Learning**

The church in Africa should make it its responsibility to advocate and foster education for all. Catholic schools in particular should be places of “evangelization, well-rounded education, inculturation and initiation to the dialogue of life among young people of different religious and social backgrounds.”<sup>304</sup> For those in advanced level of education, those in colleges and universities, the Church in Africa should enhance “a programme of a religious formation which corresponds to the [their] level of studies.”<sup>305</sup>

The Catholic Universities and the Catholic institutions of higher learning in Africa should play a very important role in evangelizing the young people. In their involvement in research, they should help in the integration of the truths and experiences of faith, and these institutions should provide the Church with highly trained personnel in theological and social sciences, that will give response to the difficult situations of the modern African youth.<sup>306</sup> “Catholic Universities and the Catholic academic institutions play an essential role in the patients’ rigorous and humble search for the light which comes from truth.”<sup>307</sup> For this particular reason, it will be very necessary to establish catholic universities and Catholic institutions of higher learning whenever they do not exist. This is because; apart from shaping the minds and hearts of the young generations in the light of the gospel, and also helping the African young people understand the challenges that are affecting them today and how they can confront them,<sup>308</sup> these institutions also prepare young people who will be the witnesses of the gospel using the knowledge and experience that they have acquired during their training days.

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<sup>304</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*”, 102.

<sup>305</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*”, 102.

<sup>306</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*”, 103.

<sup>307</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 135.

<sup>308</sup> Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 135.

In summary, the Catholic Universities and Catholic institutes of higher learning will serve the following purpose:

They [will] serve the Church by providing trained personnel, by studying important theological and social questions for the benefit of the Church, by developing an African theology, by promoting the work of inculturation, by publishing books and publicizing Catholic truths, by undertaking assignments given by the bishops and by contributing to the scientific study of cultures... Bishops will take care that those institutions of higher education maintain their Catholic identity by always moving in directions faithful to the teachings of the Church's magisterium.<sup>309</sup>

These institutions of higher learning should ensure that students are taught Church social doctrines and the bishops should “support a pastoral outreach to the life of the intellect and reason so as to foster a habit of rational dialogue and critical analysis within the society and in the Church.”<sup>310</sup>

It is good that bishops support chaplaincies within the Church's universities and schools, and establish them in their public counterparts. The chapel will be, as it were, the heart of these institutions. It will enable students to encounter God and to stand in his sight. It will also allow the chaplain, who should be carefully selected for his priestly virtues, to exercise his pastoral ministry of teaching and sanctification.<sup>311</sup>

The schools and institutions of higher learning should put at the core of their goal, the training and preparation of the young people to become responsible people in the society, so that these young people can become true witnesses of Christ in the light of the gospel truths.

We know that a lot of secularistic thinking and unbelief can be cultivated in these higher institutions of learning if there is no proper pastoral plan. These places can be used to scoff at or reject organised religion and religious authorities. This should not be the case. The African intellectuals must be the first to be properly trained and be in the forefront in the duty of evangelization, and our universities and institutions of higher learning should take it as their responsibility to do such training. These institutions can sometimes give the mentality that everything in this world should be viewed from perspective of economic value, where everything including values can be bought and sold. These views will automatically deny the metaphysical realities and can make us

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<sup>309</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 136.

<sup>310</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 138.

<sup>311</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 138.

come to the conclusion that there is no God, no soul, no spiritual reality, only matter exist.

So the universities and the institutions of higher learning must be given a priority in evangelization, and they should also train young people who are ready to evangelize others and who are ready to be ambassadors of Christ in the society.

#### **4.4. Youth for Youth, and Active Youth Evangelization**

The Church in Africa is aware that the youth are not only the present but also the future and hope of human race. It's therefore necessary to help the young people overcome the problems and obstacles that thwart their development; obstacles such as illiteracy, drugs, hunger etc.<sup>312</sup> We are always conscious that “youth is a time when genuine and irrepressible questions arise about the meaning of life and the directions our lives should take. Only God can give the true answers to these questions.”<sup>313</sup> Young people therefore “need witnesses and teachers who can walk with them, teaching them to love the gospel and to share it, especially with their peers, and thus to become authentic and credible messengers.”<sup>314</sup>

But we must also be aware that the young people should not just be considered as objects of pastoral concern for the Church. The young people should be viewed and encouraged to be active on behalf of the Church as part of the evangelization team and as participants in the renewal of the society.<sup>315</sup>

We should therefore try as much as we can to directly involve the young people in the life of the Church and of society so that they may not feel frustrated or rejected in the face of their inability to shape their own future, especially in conditions and situations where the youth are vulnerable because of either lack of education, lack of employment, political exploitation and in the face of various kinds of addiction.<sup>316</sup> After empowering

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<sup>312</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*”, 93.

<sup>313</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*”, 93.

<sup>314</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 61.

<sup>315</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation “*Christifideles Laici*”, 46.

<sup>316</sup> Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 62.

the young people, they in turn “should be called upon to become the evangelizers of their peers. No one can do this better than they.”<sup>317</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI called on the young people as follows:

Dear young people, enticement of all kinds may tempt you: ideologies, sects, money, drugs, casual sex, violence... Be vigilant: those who propose these things to you want to destroy your future! In spite of difficulties, do not be discouraged and do not give up your ideals, your hard work and your commitment to human, intellectual and spiritual formation! In order to grow in discernment, along with the strengths and the freedom needed to resist these pressures, I encourage you to place Jesus Christ at the centre of your lives through prayer, but also through the study of sacred scriptures, frequent recourse to the sacrament, formation in the Church’s social teachings and your active and authentic participation in ecclesial groups and movements. Cultivate yearning for fraternity, justice and peace. The future is in the hands of those who find powerful reason to live and to hope. If you want it, the future is in your hands, because the gifts that the Lord has bestowed upon each one of you, strengthened by your encounter with Christ, can bring genuine hope to the world.<sup>318</sup>

The young people must be advised at all times to turn to God at every moment of their important decision making in life. Decisions such as professional orientation and vocational discernment need the intervention of the Holy Spirit. In all these, Christ should be the answer, and to all our most difficult moment of life, we should turn to Christ not only as our model but also as our guide. We have to acknowledge that as young people “if we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing that make life free, beautiful and great.”<sup>319</sup>

Each and every diocese and parish in Africa should put pastoral care of the youth as part of her overall pastoral plan so that the young people can discover the value of the gift of self-early in life, so that they can get essential means to reach their personal fulfilment and maturity. In this regard, Pope John Paul II suggested that the celebration of World Youth Day will be one of the privileged instruments to reach the young people and also for their pastoral care, and this will favour their formation through prayer, Bible reflection, and their personal and communal growth.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*”, 93.

<sup>318</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Munus*”, 63.

<sup>319</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Verbum Domini*”, 104.

<sup>320</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Ecclesia in Africa*,” 93.

## 4.5. Mass Media as a Means of Evangelization

We can't deny the fact that the mass media and other means of social communication are struggling to win the hearts and minds of the young people in Africa,<sup>321</sup> and the Church knows very well that men can use these means of social communication in ways that are contrary to the creator's design, by inflicting harm to the society by their misuse.<sup>322</sup> But despite all these, "the Church, our mother, knows that if these media are properly used, they can be of considerable benefit to mankind."<sup>323</sup>

Taking this into mind, the Church must therefore master the media and use them in ways that are more impressive to the minds of the young people than the way the world uses them. There should be creative ways of using the media to communicate Christian message to the young generation.<sup>324</sup> The Church in Africa "should consider greater use of media such as drama, articles in newspaper and magazines, video libraries, music cassettes, radio and television linked together with personal outreach."<sup>325</sup> With the development of digital media in the contemporary society, evangelization must not only concentrate on print and electronic media, but the Church leaders must try to involve the digital media in its process of evangelization. The agents of evangelization must try to see how they can enhance various evangelization websites to counteract the materialistic secularism being advocated by various media houses, and they should try to reach as many young people as possible.

Those who are at the receiving end of the media, and especially the young, should learn moderation and discipline in their use of them. They should aim to understand fully what they see, hear and read. They should discuss them with their teachers and with experts in such matters and should learn to reach correct judgements. Parents on their part should remember that it's their duty to see that entertainments and publications which might endanger faith and morals do not enter their houses and that their children are not exposed to them elsewhere.<sup>326</sup>

On other part, all those who are directly or indirectly involved in making and transmission of communication materials in anyway whatsoever have a special responsibility because they have power to direct the society on a good or evil path by the

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<sup>321</sup> Cf. S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 80.

<sup>322</sup> Cf. A. FLANNERY, ed., "Inter Mirifica", 2.

<sup>323</sup> A. FLANNERY, ed., "Inter Mirifica", 2.

<sup>324</sup> Cf. S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 80.

<sup>325</sup> Cf. S. DAWNESS, et.al, *Daystar University College, Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, 80.

<sup>326</sup> A. FLANNERY, ed., "Inter Mirifica", 10.

information they impart, and the pressure they exert in the minds of all the listeners and viewers. It's therefore the first role of those who are involved in the making and transmission of communications to regulate the values in them, economic, political and artistic in ways that are in conformity with the common good. Those people responsible for the making and transmission should always be mindful of the fact that the greater number of their audience is the young people, and therefore the religious and inspirational features should be entrusted to the competent persons, and such should be handled with honour and proper respect.

Descent programmes both for radio and television, especially those suited for the family should be effectively supported. Catholic stations need to be established whenever opportune, and laity, religious and priests should be trained to acquire competence needed to use these media for the apostolate.<sup>327</sup> It will therefore be the responsibility of the “Bishop to oversee the activities and projects of this sort in their own dioceses, to promote and, where they touch the public apostolate, to regulate them, including those under the control of exempt religious.”<sup>328</sup>

Young people on their side should be trained on the use and selection of these media programmes. They should be trained on how to evaluate critically the values of the programmes they watch and hear, and at all cost, be advised not to visit the provocative sites in the internet such as those that contain pornographic and absurd materials.

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<sup>327</sup> A. FLANNERY, ed., “Inter Mirifica”, 11-15.

<sup>328</sup> A. FLANNERY, ed., “Inter Mirifica”, 20.

## **Concluding Remarks**

To counteract the wave of secularism in contemporary African society, the agents of evangelization need to intensify and adjust their means of evangelization to face the challenges and changes of the modern society. Family being the cradle of life need to be given a priority in the apostolate because the values that the young people acquire in the family environment will be very fundamental in their future lives and in their social living within the society.

This process of evangelization should be strategized in the sense that at each and every important moment of individual's growth in the society, there should be an accompanying catechesis depending on the stage and level of understanding of each and every individual. This will help the young people to cultivate Christian values that will accompany them for the rest of their lives so that the society can always have living witness of Christ peace. If this is done in each and every part of the African continent, then the young people will understand that life is not only material, but more important of it is the spiritual aspects which always make us transcend to our creator, God. This will help to counteract the current modern thoughts that try so much to exalt human freedom to the extent that freedom becomes an absolute and autonomous.<sup>329</sup> Evangelization must also accompany the young people in each and every moment of their growth in the society so that at long run, we have we have a well-integrated people in the society full of Christian values and who are ready to witness to the truth at all times.

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<sup>329</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter "*Veritatis Splendor*", 32.

## General Conclusion

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The Church Leaders in Africa have a great responsibility and challenge before them to respond as quickly as possible to the imminent threat of secularism, especially in our African towns and cities before the situation gets out of control. This is an enormous task that goes beyond the efforts of a particular Church or religion, and therefore there is an urgent need for *ecumenism* and *interreligious dialogue*.

Even though this paper has concentrated, towards its end, on the efforts that the Catholic Church need to take in the face of secularism, we can't ignore the fact that we are living in a pluralistic society where each and every moment we meet and interact with non-Catholics, and if there is no effort put to inculcate the good religious values by all faiths in the society, then the challenge will even be greater on the part of the Catholic Church to campaign for religious values among its members in its attempt to contain secularism.

The Church must therefore put it as its responsibility to ensure that they train the clergy and the religious leaders who are able to meet the challenges of the modern day. We are living in an ever-changing society and therefore the religious leaders must be well grounded on theological and sociological disciplines so that they can better understand the changing and ever-evolving environment in which the faithful lives, and so, be in a position to give adequate and proper response to the complicated problems and situations of the society.

Secularism has therefore been understood as a progressive phenomenon. Even though the traditional Africa was considered as religious (notoriously religious), the modern Africa seems to be losing this sense of religiosity and if no immediate measures are taken, then the Africans will find themselves moving towards secularistic lifestyles, and if the trend maintain its tempo, then we will find that Africans will still move from secularistic lifestyles to atheistic ideologies and modes of life.

The rapid changes from traditional to modernity with its materialistic characteristics has therefore created many challenges in Africa, and among them is this challenge of secularism, which is spreading very fast in our African society especially in our towns and cities. Secularism and its tenets therefore appear in almost all the areas of our everyday lives, and it has its features immediately from the family and to the society at-large. Agents of secularism in Africa has therefore been identified among others as; globalisation, mass media and exchange of philosophies and ideologies. It has been found that secularism is affecting the young people in our African society more than the rest of the society.

The church leaders must therefore put appropriate strategies to ensure that secularism does not penetrate too much in our African societies, especially among the young people. If the young people are the future of our societies, and if their thinking and lifestyles are characterised by secularistic ideologies and mode of living at their tender age, then the future of our society will be with no doubt secularistic.

The number of clergy being trained must also keep at par with the ever increasing number of faithful especially in our towns and cities in Africa. Apart from the general training of the clergy, special attention should be given to those clergy who specialize in the youth ministry/affairs. This is because the young people are the ones who are mostly affected by the new changes and challenges of the society, and therefore, they need specialised people trained to help them overcome their difficult moments. The religious leaders and the clergy must also be models to the young people by the very way of life they lead in the society. The young people too must be put as part of the evangelization team, and not just be viewed as objects of evangelization.

The Church in Africa must also be ready to face the task of reaching those people who profess indigenous religions and bring them to the face of Jesus Christ and to the light of the Gospel. The Church must try to see that the values of these indigenous religions are enlightened by the gospel values, and also try to see the ways in which these indigenous religions can also bring more light and enrich the Christian faith and values.

The Christian laity must also be united with the clergy to ensure that the work of evangelization is carried out effectively. Parents must not leave their children only in the hands of the clergy. For us to combat secularism in Africa, family in itself must be first of all the domestic Church. Together as one, we must ensure that we use every Christian means available to keep secularism at bay, and to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to everybody living in the society, so that we can grow together as one family of God, and we will hear the voice of the Lord, “and there will be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:16).

If we take into consideration that the future of the world in general, and Africa in particular, depends in part on today’s youth, then we have to show the young people that they are loved and accepted in the society and that they belong somewhere. It’s true that majority of our African youth experiences great challenges in the moment of their growth, probably more than other young men and women elsewhere, but we have the responsibility to inculcate Christian values in these young men and women so that they can live a dignified life full of moral values.

Pastors of the youth in Africa must promote the social and material wellbeing of individuals in the society, but not at the expense of God and religious values. The wellbeing of the person must not be limited to the material aspect of our being only, but it must also include the spiritual aspect, knowing that man as such is both a spiritual and material being. The worship of power, money and other secular worldly realities should be condemned, and God with religious values must be restored to their proper place. Young people must be made to understand in a proper way that life is not only here and now, but also transcendent. Pastoral theologians must be in a position to examine “religion and its relation to socio-economic development, belief, cults and moral issues affecting the people of Africa,”<sup>330</sup> especially the youth, and be ready to give relevant responses to such situations.

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<sup>330</sup>M. M. THEURI, “Religion and Culture as Factors in the Development of Africa,” 188.

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