

African Traditional Religion In A Secularized World: Which Way?

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Abstract: Wherever the Africans go there is his religion, he carries his religion to his house, market place etc. this above assertion is credited to Mbiti. This corroborates with the title of this article. Africa is always moving with his religion and so the threats of secularism from every quarter has not really affected African Traditional Religion. The religion, because it is indigenous and also written in the languages and the day to day life of the African man is strong, dogged and has come to stay. However the world is secularized but in the midst of that people still fall back to the indigenous religion when things start moving the way they do not like or when they need favour from the gods or when they want to appreciate the gods. Secularism posited serious threat to African Traditional Religion that notwithstanding the indigenous Religion which is the African Traditional Religion has tap root and has gained ground before secularism. The paper tries to look at the different ways secularism tried to secularize African Traditional Religion which include Education, Social Life, Politics etc. the paper concluded that in the midst of all these that African Traditional Religion was able to raise her head high and survive in the midst of the threat of secularism. The paper made use of socio-historical approach in her analysis.

Keywords: African, Traditional, Religion, secularized world.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mbiti (1962) made it equivocally clear that:

Wherever the African is, there is his religion; he carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to 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 representative. (P-2).

The above assertion of Mbiti presupposes that there is no part of the African man's activities (daily) that is not in one way or the other influenced by this religion. Against this backdrop, we can see that Africans value their religion and so that their religion is very important to them.

The question whether the African Traditional religion is relevant in the midst of secularism now comes in. The answer is in the affirmative following what Mbiti echoed and equally following the life and the worldview of the Africans which we

have earlier treated in this work. This chapter can now be treated in different spheres of life which Africans engage themselves in the day-to-day living namely: politics, education, social life, religion and moral life.

Oduyoye (1989) in her article titled 'Explaining God in the eye of an African' said that writing about Africa is a hazardous venture. She argued that the parameters that are needed to be drawn are so much considering the diversified nature of the continent in almost all works of life. It becomes more difficult when the subject of religion is raised due to the fact that Africans are very religious people with different religious beliefs and affiliations. From the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope, experiences abound about God. For an instance, in the building of the pyramids and continuing to underguard the annual festivals, West Africans showcase the values of Africans. Some Africans are Muslims from Cape Verde to the Red Sea down to Dar and throughout the continent, some of them are having roots down to the inception of Islam while others are recent converts.

The same goes for the Christians, who are predominantly in west, central and south Africa. Africa also hosts Hindi, Sikhs and Buddhists and so many others. Nevertheless, we are here discussing the African God on a multi - relational context. To create a handle for the discussion of this topic, we shall limit ourselves to the primal religion (the African Religion) as it has been documented by recent studies.

However, the fool says in his heart, "there is no God". There are no such 'fools' in Africa because the centre of the African existence has already been on the belief of the supernatural. In his lectures delivered at the University of Ibadan in 1974, Prof. Bolaji Idowu discussed the reality and unreality of God under the title, *Obituary: God's or man's*, bringing to that university the 'God is dead' debate of the 1960s. Idowu believes that man's estimate of himself, his destiny, his interpretation of the phenomena of the universe and his philosophy of history depend on one central point - his belief in God.

In Traditional Africa that is, Africa free from Christianity, Islamic and Western norms, that was when Africans were being themselves, God is experienced as an all pervading reality. God is a constant participant in all human activity as is seen or unseen; the grand overseer of things seen or hidden.

In Africa, true secularism cannot be attained due to African belief of the past as the airlifted of the present and the determinants out of the future. In the real African setting, there is very little to choose between the sacred and secular as Africans are usually bond by the invisible law of good and bad. We will now go into different area of life of Africans.

II. POLITICS

Politics is termed dirty simply because of the way people carry it out. Politics naturally is not dirty but the people playing the game are corrupt and dirty. Clark (1995) in his view about politics and Nigeria asserts that:

Corruption, though a universal phenomenon, appears to have become so endemic in Nigerian politics that most discoveries about the country here and elsewhere, center more on the high ascendancy of corruption in our public life. (p. 125).

Corruption in politics is institutionalized such that not only that official are corrupt, but that corruption is the officials themselves. This political corruption has affected African in different areas like, waste of resources, reduction of government administrative capacity and loss of legitimacy, creating undesired feeling of frustration and disgust. In political terms, secularism is referred to as a separation of religion from state. It means religion should not interfere with or be interpreted into the public affairs of a society. This can refer to reducing ties between a government and a state religion, planning laws based on scripture and traditional religious norms with civil laws. Secularists would prefer that politicians make decisions based on secular reasons rather than religions ones. They deceive the people with democratic slogans like "personal freedom", and other democratic slogans like "no religion in politics and no politics in religion" All these are the ways secularists deceive people and try to confuse them so *is* not to yield to the tenets and instructions of

the African Traditional Religion [However, the political corruption has affected the African world so much through the ways mentioned above. How then can African traditional religion or African god relevant in politics especially having seen the opinion of Clerk that politics is full of corruption.

The first thing is that the God fearing people should occupy the seats of governance and govern with sincerity, loyalty and fairness. By doing this, the individual in question follow the mind of African God who is known to be just and fights for those who have nobody to fight for themselves. Hence, anybody struggling to enter the political position must bear this in mind that he or she is not going there to enrich himself rather he is going there to serve others. Nevertheless, one doing all this must be courageous enough, take the bold step; politicians however should be counseled by the religious leaders. The religious leaders have it as a role to participate in politics through advising, educating and counseling the people that are to be elected on the importance of the role.

Ogbunwezeh (2004) has it that the only thing it takes for evil to triumph and be crowned or canonized a norm, is for good men to grovel in silence and in action. (p.4). His opinion was that silence is tantamount to a collaborative conspiracy with the evil that is on the wings of asserting himself over right and justice. He warned that whenever the evil outwits good, that the good people around should rise up and condemn it immediately. These need courageous people to challenge the evil in politics. The courageous people are the people who will value Africa and its values and believe in what African God can do and her importance.

The African God has never fully departed from the blood streams of the African man. The Africans will always directly or indirectly pay obedience to the dictates, Doctrines and belief of the African God.

The family is the first and basic structure of societal politics, the concept of the African religion has not left the make-up of most African homes despite the higher western trends. The father still remains the political head of the family; the father makes the decisions in the family and is expected to receive unadulterated submission from "is wife despite the radical revolution by the woman and human right activity for a more neutral share of power between the man and the woman, where it shared the work of lie various members of the family which was accordance with the stands of the African system.

In the traditional Africa form of leadership in most communities today, the African traditional system is still the formal institutional way of leadership. In the various societies of Africa, community leaders both religious and secular are instituted by the chief priests of various deities, as leadership is seen to be sent by the gods for the people. The people go as far as seeking for the leaders based on the selection of the gods, and at difficult times in the community, resort to the advice of these gods for guidance.

Charms and medicines are used for power tussle today to boost political potency. Politicians resort to the use of charms and powers from the African gods to enhance their chances and propel their stay in political offices. Take for an instance, the case of Chris Ngige and Chris Uba in the 2003 gubernatorial race in Anambra State. Osague (2003) reported that:

Chris Ngige was taken to the popular *Okija* shrine to take an oath of allegiance to Chris Uba as his godfather before giving him the governorship ticket of Anambra state. In his words, 'Godfatherism is existing and continues to exist in politics.' in this case, the African God was used as a witness to preserve the oath taken by both parties ahead of the election, (p.64).

Politicians also used the African God to clear the path to their position of pursuit. Some inflict death on opponents while others use the African God to promote their cause. Some other use them for protection while for some of them, it is a form of formal belief. For instance, Nwosu (1999) reported the case of the former senate president of Nigeria, Late Dr. Chuba Okadigbo who protested against using the Holy Bible or Quran for his swearing in. Instead he opted for his personal god, his 'Ofo'. The former senate president valued the African culture and opted for his personal 'ofo' against using the Holy Bible. According to Okadigbo (in Nwosu, 1999),

I am an African; an African traditionalist, and not a Christian, and so should profess my religion anywhere I go to and so I prefer to swear with 'ofo' which is the symbol of truth and honesty in Igbo land, and that is where I come from. (p.63).

The action of senator Chuba Okadigbo corroborates what Mbiti (1962) said that Africans carry their religion wherever they go to, that there is no difference between religion and other aspects of the African life. However, politicians of today should be advised to impel the power of African god positively in politics and not using it to harm others.

III. RELIGION

Ugwu (2002) in his article, the 'Cleansed Society: The Igbo Traditional

Religious Attitude Toward Corruption' opined that:

Igbo traditional religion on the other hand involves all the beliefs, practices and ritual elements handed down from one generation to another. It is one of the richest cultural heritages of the Igbo because they are obdurately religious (P. 192).

Following the above assertion that Igbo traditional religion involves all the lives of the African man, that presupposes that African are notoriously religious as Mbiti (1969) echoed: that each has its own religious beliefs and practices (p. 1) Africans fear their gods more than any other thing such that for one to indulge in evil, he or she must suffer for it psychologically before facing the wrath of God. Many, even attribute this African unreserved reverence to their gods as being responsible for the underdevelopment in Africa.

Uzukwu (1996) puts it this way:

...that sometimes one hears that religion has become a disease in Africa, that religion is an obstacle to the development of the continent just as we have the opposite in the development of other continents like Europe (p.26).

This assertion, one can say, was as a result of the way Africans see their gods and their whole life style. One cannot really demarcate their political and social life from their religious life. However, the advent of colonialism, slavery etc. changed this thought of Africa. There was a sort of brain

washing that took place such that African mentality changed from having utmost reverence to their gods to other dubious ways of worshipping. Many people now open churches for different purposes such as fame, money etc. They no more follow strictly the laid down principles and values of traditional African Religion like regard for the sacred and the gods.

Ugwueye (2002) opined in respect to this that:

Our era could best be described as a period of bastardization of religion by "corrupt believers" for purely selfish reasons. It is inconceivable that people should open 'churches' with the purpose of making money (p.222).

Which one then is the right thing to do? To follow the dictates of the gods or to do it for individual selfish aim or interest? Hence the whole scenario seems hopeless because all these wrong ideologies are being inculcated into the youth who supposedly are the leaders of tomorrow. Nevertheless, that all these things mentioned are happening does not mean that African God is not relevant again. The African God is relevant and will continue to be relevant in the religion of Africans especially in the Igbo land. We can see it thus in this area. The former Senate President, Late Dr. Chuba Okadigbo demonstrated that they were true believers of the African religion and in practice. His preference for his personal God (OFO) as the symbol of Oath of allegiance speaks volumes for the religion.

The African God is still relevant today in the religious circle and very important such that amongst the western cultures, they believe that there are some power reposed on the African God where some powerful religious leaders get their powers and use them to manipulate people. These are the members of the western religions but in the real context are the true advertisers of the supremacy of the African God. You get this case also on the issues of church goers who at their various points of need instead of following the gods of their new religion rather returns back to the roots for the solution to their problems.

Mandela (1996) wrote about the 'traditional African Christian' that:

My father was an unordained native priest, who attends to the problems of the community'. Christians at that time come subtly to obtain solutions from him which the traditionalists do them openly, therefore, he was at some sort, the religious father of the society, (p. 10)

Another finger pointing to the supremacy of the African God in the religious clique is that most of the modern religious activities take root from an African descent or the African God perspective. Take for an instance, of a significant day in the life of Christians called Sunday. This day was dedicated to the worship of the 'Sun God' popularly known as 'Anyanwu' in Igbo land or Mithraism in the oriental culture. This culture came into Rome in the first century and became very popular in the second and third centuries when Emperor Constantine led the Christian revolution in the 3rd century, the worshippers of this sun God were destroyed, temples burnt and then the holy day which was the most popular day, was then converted for the Christian use so as to see to the total annihilation of that religion.

Next is the celebration of Christmas on the 25th of December, a significant day for Christians to commiserate the birth of the

Christian God. This day was used to celebrate the feast of the unconquered sun (Sol Invictus) but due to the popularity of this feast and the problems it was causing for the early Christians, during the revolution, it was also changed for the glory of the western church.

IV. MORAL LIFE

Secularism advocates that morality should be separated from religion. Under the secular system of morality, religion should have no control over the code of behavior. There is no need to refer to any guidance of religion in the sphere of social morality. The secular western philosophers have developed some of the basic ethical questions which are completely free from the grip of religion. The first question is about sources of knowledge of good and evil. They have no agreed answer to it; rather, they turn themselves to diverse sources like human experience, intuition, reason, etc. So, people are confronted with a confused situation. The result is that the good of one individual and group is in conflict with the good of other individuals and groups. From a religious perspective, the real knowledge of good and evil is provided by Divine Guidance. It is the primary source, while all others are considered secondary sources. For example, anything which Divine guidance states to be good would receive confirmation from human experience. The principles of justice, truthfulness, honesty, and equality are all good principles mentioned by Divine revelations and have proven to be good in the application of human experience.

The second question is the sanction behind the moral law. In response to this question, some said the moral law does not need any external force; it is self-enforcing. Others claim that political power is the real sanction behind the moral law, and this group rests all these powers and functions to the state. Yet another group assigns the society to be responsible for it. Again all of these replies have created confusion in the life of humanity. In fact, we may argue that both the state and the society are not perfect and might be in error. For instance, the legalization of acts of homosexuality by the Western society is obviously wrong and contradicts human nature. From a religious point of view, the real sanction behind the moral law should lie in our strong faith and belief in God.

The third question is about the motive of moral conduct. It was again responded to with different answers by different schools of thought. Some said the motive is to get reward from a society in the form of esteem and to avoid punishment in the form of denunciation. Others said the motive is for the purpose of self-perfection and pleasure. Those sorts of questions clearly show that people face moral confusion. From a religious point of view, the feeling of ultimate purpose and fulfillment of convictions in seeking the pleasure of God and fearing his punishment in the hereafter should be the real motive of moral conduct.

As a result of this removal of God's guidance, people are faced with the crisis of an unstable system of morality with no standard of judgment. From the religious point of view, the system of morality cannot be formulated by man due to his limitations and weakness, like prejudice, greed, selfish

desires, etc. Man's knowledge and experience are limited. Thus, when he tries to construct his own system of morality, it will never be perfect. It will need constant changing, updating, and modifications. The code of conduct which is provided by God through Divine guidance, however, will always be perfect as God knows and has the best way for mankind. Furthermore the moral laws provided by the African culture are there and are important, and should be adhered to.

V. EDUCATIONAL LIFE

Education is one of the most important cornerstones of all human societies. The impact of secularism on educational systems is considered serious and dangerous since it is directly responsible for the intellectual quality of human beings. Under the impact of secularism, the importance of God is eliminated almost completely from public education; thus, it is not essential to the end or purpose of education. The common implication of such elimination is either God has no place of reference in education, or it is strictly a matter of private concern. In either case, it gives rise to a tendency to give religion a low priority in private life; or worse, to engender young people with no sense of responsibility to God. Such secular system of education has failed to inspire the new generation with moral and religious values, thus, led the society to an immoral and irreligious life.

Sorrel [1954] asserts that:

In a secular system of education, knowledge is gained through certain methods like the experimental method, experience, rational thinking, and the scientific method. Scientism is one of the intellectual challenges posed by secularism. Scientism is the belief that science, especially natural science, is the most valuable part of human learning, and the scientific method is the only reliable and valid way of acquiring knowledge. [P. 136]

Thus, scientism adopts an absolute perspective on reality, where it assumes that only scientific knowledge is capable of providing an accurate description of reality, and the truth. Scientism rejects other sources of knowledge, such as Divine revelation religious experience and inner intuition, and it avoids dealing with the metaphysical, philosophical, and religious knowledge, as the truths they proclaim cannot be discovered and rationalized by the scientific method. Signs of scientism could be found in writings as early as the seventeenth century. Scientism became the dominant ideology in the eighteenth century with the triumph of the Newtonian description of the universe. This description posits a serious challenge to religion because it professed to describe universal laws that govern the cosmos solely by scientific method, such as through mathematical principle. The religious claims that the heavenly bodies obey the will of God became unpopular with the rise of the Newtonian description of the universe. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, science was far more popular than religion. Writings on scientism became more prevalent after the nineteenth century with the rise of scientific positivism, an ideology that was initiated by August Comte. Comte saw the scientific method as an absolute method of acquiring knowledge and truth, and worthy of replacing the

theological and metaphysical approaches. In this sense, Comte attempted to eliminate transcendent reality from the human consciousness in his declaration that all questions that cannot be answered by the sciences of the phenomena as illegitimate. Scientism clearly contributed to the loss of transcendental consciousness, and its development undermined the religious foundations of faith. The religious metaphysical elements that pointed toward the existence of a transcendent reality could not be reconciled with the immanent methods of scientism.

Another secular ideology emerging from the principle of secularism is scientific materialism. Scientific materialism does not differ much, in practice from the principles of scientism. It is the belief that only objects and phenomena which can be observed and measured through scientific methods are real. Thus, scientific materialism accepts only one reality; that is physical, empirical and material universe. It sees all the claims of the religious and spiritual traditions of humanity throughout the ages as false not based on revealed and religious belief, but rather upon cultural tradition reinforced by strictly philosophical premises based upon speculations. As such, this knowledge projects that secular life, centered upon man and his intellectual capacity, is alone able to unravel the mysteries of his environment and existence. Consequently, man's life will accordingly be guided by such limited knowledge as acquired by his intellectual faculties.

In secularism, worldly sciences are exploited to produce a mechanistic and materialistic human being without the aspects of humanity and spirituality. However, from the religious point of view, these sciences should be used to achieve a firm knowledge of God and to strive for spiritual perfection. The science of cosmology, for instance, maybe viewed as a sort of contemplation or remembrance of God. Furthermore, the objective of seeking knowledge in a secular education is simply to cultivate certain abilities of men, which will enable them to develop their country well as to improve their standard of living. This is basically worldly purpose alone, and devoid of any spiritual element. As such, one can achieve success in his life, and at the same time, be an alcoholic, adulterer and atheist; and may commit any immoral act without consequence. Meanwhile, religious education gives emphasis on the teaching of virtue. From an African traditional religious perspective, seeking knowledge is considered as an act of [religious ritual] and should be done for the sake of getting: blessing from God who gives the knowledge. It should also be gained and used for a better life in this world as well as in the hereafter. That is why knowledge in African traditional religious has been classified into two kinds.

The first kind is acquired knowledge, which includes all natural and social sciences, such as physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, psychology, politics, economics, etc. The second kind of knowledge is revealed knowledge [God-given knowledge] and religious sciences, which include knowledge about belief, Divine injunctions, proper conduct, etc. Revealed knowledge should be the utmost priority for any individual in the quest of knowledge since it would serve as the foundation or basis for one's thoughts or worldview. (pg. 103).

The secular system of education only concentrates on acquired knowledge and concerns this world alone. The result is scientific materialism and this has considerable effects on the way a person would shape his life. For example, a believer in scientific materialism would believe and act only on that which is in with scientific conclusions.

In its early stage, one of the materialistic philosophies that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from this belief was Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) theory of Evolution. The publication of Darwin's works on evolution demonstrated the possibility that living organisms could be accounted for on a material basis without any need to refer to a supernatural source and creator. For Darwin man is a part and product of the natural world in his Theory of Evolution.

Edward (1959) stated that Darwin claims

That all living things have evolved by natural processes from pre-existing forms. The appearance of various species and the historical development of the universe are solely the result of gradual evolution from within the space-temporal material matrix, which existed at the origin of the physical cosmos without the intrusion of any transcendental causes. (P.795).

This displaces the traditional belief that species are designed by a wise and benevolent God. The conception of knowledge in secular education has lost its true purpose by being unjustly conceived. Its formulation of vision and reality was concerned about who he is, where he comes from, what is the purpose of his existence, who is his God and so on. Consequently, this system produces doctors, engineers, architects, and economists, scientists, and politicians who lack religious foundation. How could we then expect these people to govern and administer the world accordance with the way God wants it?

In Muslim countries, the significance of religious education has diminished with the establishment of secular schools. One of the main characteristics of a Muslim secular outlook of education is its influence from modern Western rationalism and scientific developments. There is no doubt that Islam, in general, is compatible with reason and science, but some Muslim modernists have gone further by over emphasizing on the role of reason and science in Islam. For example, a scholar of the Indian subcontinent, Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) laid down what he termed the criterion of 'Conformity to Nature to judge the contents of systems of belief and concluded that Islam justified itself on this principle, (p.218) Being influenced strongly by nineteenth century Western rationalism and natural philosophy, he argued that Islam was the religion of reason and nature. The Qur'an must be interpreted in accordance with reason and nature, and the legal and moral code must be based on nature. Nature has been declared as a close-knit system of causes and effects, which allow no supernatural intervention. In this regard, Sayyid Ahmad Khan implies that there is nothing which transcended the world of nature, and that man is the judge of all things.(p.218) Clearly, he was influenced by a kind of deism, which was fashionable among the nineteenth century scientific circles of the West.

In order to assert the autonomy of nature and natural laws, Sayyid Ahmad Khan not only denied the miracles, angels, and jinn, but also the bodily resurrection, the Day of Judgment,

Heaven and Hell, all of which, he insisted, must be rejected on principle. His secular view was also observable on the socio-cultural and political domain. In this sphere, he undertook the reformation of Muslim society in India by publishing a journal, *Tahdhib al-Akhlak*, in which he discussed the prevailing customs and social habits of the Muslims from a rationalistic and utilitarian viewpoint. In intellectual terms, he attempted to integrate western and Islamic thought because he believed that a Muslim's adjustment to the modern intellectual realities was absolutely essential. Therefore, he introduced among Muslims the western educational system in order to transform their mentality and to enable them to enter government services. His Aligarh University, modeled on Cambridge University, aimed at the liberation of ideas and the inculcation of a scientific worldview and a pragmatic approach to politics. It gave a new direction to Muslims, politically and culturally. His visit to England was intended to study the culture and institutions of Europe for the program and betterment of India. It, however, strongly influenced him.

From the nineteenth century onward, the Muslim world experienced a dual system of education namely, religious and modern secular education. Religious education was normally available and aimed specifically for religious purposes: for example, learning Arabic and memorizing the Qur'an. The syllabus of modern knowledge was almost completely neglected. Meanwhile, modern secular educational only emphasis modern knowledge following the western educational philosophy with no emphasis on religion. This new kind of education represented an important factor in the introduction of secularism. The implication of a dual system of education in Muslim societies resulted in a division of schools of thought into two major categories: the traditionalists and the secular-liberal intellectuals. The traditionalists are the product of the traditional system of education, well versed with traditional sciences, loyal and committed to their religion and traditions, but completely ignorant of modern knowledge. Meanwhile, the secular liberal intellectuals are the product of a secular system of education, well-acquainted with modern philosophical thoughts and ideas, exposed to modern culture and life-styles, but completely ignorant of their own religions traditions. Between the traditionalists and secular-liberal intellectuals, there was a mediating group of Muslim modernists who made efforts to remove a dual system of education in the Muslim world. In their educational reform, they were neither content with the traditional religious education because it lacked the modern subjects, nor with the modern education because it lacked the religious subjects, which degenerated moral standards among students. Therefore, they proposed to combine both types of education, so that they participate in the development of their country and society as well as to maintain their religious beliefs and practices. In African Traditional Religion, African God has become a fixture in the life of scholars and in the scholar's world so wrote Idowu (1990). In his writing, he argues that though westerners have long gone in discrediting the existence of power in the African traditional belief, they have as well dedicated volumes of scholarly work in the matter, (p. 108). His argument being that, if they had not been substance in what they saying Africa, they the westerns world

not have been discussing the said issue up until this moment in time.

The African God has formed basics of study for scholars in institutions especially in the courses of social studies, African and Asian studies, history and international relations as well as anthropology. Time has been dedicated to the study of great gods in the Isle of Africa for instance, Amon of Egypt, Lissa of Egypt. It created the idea and implementation of one of the greatest art creation of all time, the Monalisa creation by Leonardo da Vinci, the sun god has generated a lot of steam amongst scholars as well.

VI. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

The impact of secularism on social and cultural aspects is seen to be related to the role of media and ICT like TV and internet, which occupy a central position in contemporary living. Both have adverse effects on African traditional rules and other faith communities primarily because they are controlled by people who are not sensitive to religion, introducing various values which are completely alien to the teachings of religion. A new generation has been exposed to all kinds of modern western fashions and life-styles. To them, the religious values and teachings as embedded in their African cultures have simply become irrelevant. Programs shown on TV are highly detrimental to the entertainments, violence, and sex scenes. These will also affect the minds of youngsters. Such programs systematically ignore the religious and spiritual aspects of life.

With the idea of separating religion from worldly activities, secularism gives a very bad impact on the morality of people and turns them to the state of ignorance. Under the influence of secularism, people are free to engage in immoral activities, such as homosexuality, adultery, abortion, etc. Secular governments, such as the United State of America have legalized the practice of homosexual marriage in the name of the freedom of expression and choice. It also validates adultery which destroys the institution of marriage and denies the role of the family institution. Adultery becomes a solution for the secularist to avoid responsibilities in married life. The practice of adultery brings many bad implications on society, such as the decline of lineage, the increase, and opens the road to other ethical problems like abortion. The legalization of abortion by certain societies has made them like barbarians in attitude, despite their scientific and technological advances. The act of abortion is strictly prohibited in African tradition religion as it is similar to murder. It is a cruel act that destroys the very feeling of humanity.

The moral values among the youth are greatly being demolished under the influence of secularism. Since it minimizes the importance of religion and excludes God's guidance almost completely in the daily affairs of man's life, people are free to engage in wrongdoing, and thus, immoral acts keep increasing from day to day one believes that all religions provide a beautiful way and code of conduct for their followers to live a peaceful life in this world. It is important to note that secularism also affects the cultural values of each society. Under the influence of secularism, people show less

concern about their cultural values because they feel that their cultural heritage is outdated and old fashioned. Culture should be protected for the new generation because it is the only element which preserves and imparts an identity, image, and uniqueness of each society and country. In the secularism point of view, people should forget their values, norms, and culture in order to achieve the standard of modern community. This justification is certainly invalid as we can still have a modern I and developed country with a strong spirit of its own culture. The idea of secularism has been the major preoccupation of the group of modern African who endeavor to prove the supremacy of western culture and civilization. Their attraction to western culture and civilization prompted them to regard them as superior to African traditional religion. One such secular African share a positive attitude toward western civilization is the Egyptian write Albert (1938) he writes:

We must become European in every way. Accepting both its good and its bad, we must follow the path of the Europeans so as to their equals and partners in civilization, in its good and evil, its sweetness and bitterness, what a can be loved or hated, and what can be praise or blamed."(p. 41).

Albart argued that becoming European is more beneficial than becoming Africans and welcoming African values. However, the African God plays a very important role in the social life of Africans in the secular world. The African God has always been a source of justice for the society; the traditional African will always seek peace and justice from the Supreme God of Africa. The poor will always plead for his prayers and religious help are obtained with money.

The traditional African God will always act as moral grind in the society, good and evil serves as a moral for o him. It has served to teach us the ethic of better living. The love for communal brotherhood existence as well channeling our energy though the right source.

Thus without a direct source of leadership, the society would have been in mins, the belief of the Africans on the God who oversees and overhears all our deeds has always served as a warning to determinants as well as solace to the oppressed on the promise and belief of a better tomorrow.

In the social life of the Igbo, the African God still represents a great sense to be seen by the breaking of kola nut in any gathering amongst them. In the society, in tribute to their gods, the Igbo offers sacrifices in the form of kola nut, thanking the gods as well as seeking for their guidance in all they do the individual Igbo man is not left out in the matter as they still offer thanks and prayers to their gods early in the morning seeking protection in all they do for the day.

Traditional chiefs, native chief priests and dealers with the African God are always treated with some sort of fear and respect in the society. This is done in indirect reverences to the power which is believed they wield from the gods. They are treated with respect in indirect submission to the supernatural being which they represent.

Nevertheless, secularism has struggled to make African god irrelevant in the area of social life but all to known avail. Modern African youths have tried to modernize some by the African cultures like the new yam festivals, masquerade cults etc. but as they are making efforts to water down the values,

the more African god is becoming relevant because Africaus in their nature is religious and had no inclination, tendering and penchant for discussing what will estrange their relationship with their gods.

Smith (1950) opined in support of this that:

God is central in Ibo traditional religious belief. Man is also given a paramount position in Igbo belief system hence in the pyramidal structure of African Traditional Religion, God is rated as the highest in rank (p.47).

Smith however, in his remark argued that no amount of effort will be enough for secularization to suppress the love and relevance Africans have for their gods and culture.

VII. CONCLUSION

Having gone through the work, the researchers tried to x-ray how Africans value their religion. In the x-raying, it was discovered that Africans are really religious as Mbiti rightly opined. However, despite the effort secularism made to distract Africans from how they still value their religion and gods.

Consequently, the politics, social, religion, education of African man are really together, to try to extricate it would be a difficult task which would not be possible, thus, one needs to understand African culture, the background before you can juxtapose it with other cultures of religion. This is the Kpin of what the researcher opined in the work.

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