

THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies
Church History Emphasis

Adventist University of Africa

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**TITLE: THE GROWTH OF SECULAR HUMANISM AND CHRISTIANITY
IN GHANA (1980-2015)**

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Secular humanism has found roots in a country as religious and Christian as Ghana. Since secular humanism denies the existence of and the reliance on the supernatural, it is mutually exclusive of Christianity and presents a challenge to it. Though secular humanism is a threat to Christianity in Ghana, Christians in the country seem not to pay much attention to it. This may be because work has not particularly been done into the inception of this philosophy into the Ghanaian society and how it is growing. The study is a historical-theological study into secular humanism in Ghana to establish its roots and determine its influence on Christianity in the nation.

The analytical methodology was used in this study. The work relied heavily on bibliographical research. It analyzed literature to understand the Ghanaian view and position on humanism. It also relied on journals, magazines, newspapers, and news-sites to trace the trends of events in the country to understand how Christianity has

been faring and interacting with secular humanism. It also looks at how receptive, or otherwise, Ghanaians have been to secular humanism and how this philosophy has been doing on the Ghanaian scene.

The study discovered that, indeed, secular humanism received reception in Ghana first through the philosophical foundations that Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, laid for it. It was further nurtured by Hope Tawiah and has in recent times been popularized by the Humanist Association of Ghana. The Humanist Association of Ghana has done much to promote this philosophy and it is warming its way into the hearts of the Ghanaian community. It was also discovered that perhaps the strength of secular humanism in Ghana is in the weakness of Christianity in the country lately.

This work seeks to add voice to creating awareness about the existence of secular humanism in Ghana, providing some historical data to that effect. It has also provided knowledge into how secular humanism is growing; documenting the activities of secular humanist organizations and some fallen standards in Ghanaian Christianity. Finally, it has provided recommendations and practical ways by which the Christian community in Ghana can stem the tide.

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A thesis

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:



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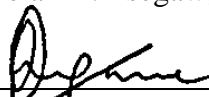
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To the Lord God Almighty, to whom I owe all I am and ever hope to be.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAH	African Americans for Humanism
CBC	Catholic Bishops Conference
CCG	Christian Council of Ghana
CSF	Common-Sense Foundation
HAG	Humanist Association of Ghana
IHEU	International Humanist and Ethical Union
IHEUYO	International Humanist and Ethical Union Youth Organization
LGBT	Lesbians, Gay, Bisexuals, and Transgender
RCG	Rational Center of Ghana

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The average Ghanaian believes in God and the supernatural by default. The Ghanaian, as an African, is highly religious and embraces a theistic worldview.¹ There seem to be no room for the secular in the Ghanaian culture.² The Akan parlance, *obinkyere akwadaa Nyame, to wits, nobody teaches the child about God* attests to how much belief in God is taken for granted in the Ghanaian culture. The Ghanaian by nature is a very religious person who may accommodate divergent religious viewpoints but frown on ideologies that seek to dismiss the existence of the supernatural altogether. Belief in God as the originator and sustainer of life is embedded in the African cosmology.

In Ghana today, Christianity is the dominant religion. This religion has permeated the socio-political and socio-economic fiber of the nation. Christianity has so become popular that there even comes with some sense of pride for a person to identify themselves as Christians or as members of a Christian denomination. Ghana as a republic, observes some Christian traditions. The Parliament of Ghana has a tradition of holding carols night every Christmas Eve.

¹ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (London, UK: Hurst, 2004), 41.

² John S. Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Heinemann, 1990), 1.

Furthermore, the country observes some statutory public holidays which includes Christmas and Easter holidays.

Christian leaders are accorded some respect and privileges in the Ghanaian society. They are regarded as “men of God” and His representatives on earth and so they are respected even by governments. Their contributions to national development have been significant and respected. The Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), the Ghana Pentecostal Council (GPC) and the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) have been enormously influential in the political landscape of the nation. The overriding belief in the Ghanaian culture is that God as the creator is the determiner of the fate of mankind. Religion has played this significant role in society because the Ghanaian believes that every good thing comes but from God.

The general understanding in the Ghanaian society is that we need God to experience the goodness. This belief is reflected in the various prayer services that are held on the eve of national elections and the thanksgiving services that usually follow. Though Ghana is a secular state, it is highly religious and mostly Christian in worldview. Christianity has been doing quite well in the country.

Secular humanism is an anti-religious worldview. It believes that humans have come of age and have discovered that the idea of God is the invention of man. It believes that religion hinders human progress and that to build a healthy society, man has to do away with the concept of God. In short, secular humanism believes that we are better off without the idea of God and His involvement in the affairs of humanity.³ Secular humanism is mutually exclusive of Christianity.

³ Don Evans, *Humanism and Religion in Humanism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Don Evans (Washington, DC: Washington Area Secular Humanists, 1999), 1, 2.

As a largely Christian nation, philosophies of secular humanism have not been given prominence in Ghana. In recent times, however, the ideologies of secular humanist have been making inroads into the Ghanaian culture and have been either converting or confusing Christians. Whereas in times past people with non-religious views could scarcely air their views openly, non-religious views are declared and discussed openly today.⁴ One cannot take it for granted that Ghanaians are mostly Christian in their worldview any longer or that Christianity in Ghana will continue to thrive. Secular humanistic thought is gaining acceptance primarily among the elite in Ghana.

The Humanist Association of Ghana (HAG), The Common-Sense Foundation (CSF) and the defunct Ghana Rationalist Center have all played significant roles in battling religion, especially Christianity, in Ghana over the past few years. Being mutually exclusive, the rise of Secular Humanism in Ghana would logically have a negative impact on Christianity. Secular humanism is still young in Ghana, and its organizations have been working on the sidelines while Christians in the country have not given much attention to them.

No historical works have been done in Ghana looking into the rise of secular humanism in the country concerning the challenge it poses to the Christian faith. There are no works done on the history of secular humanism in Ghana and its impact on Christianity. This study is historical and it looks into the origins of secular humanistic thoughts in Ghana, and the impact it has been having on Christianity in recent times.

⁴ Kwame Acheampong, "There Is No Evidence There's God – Humanist," *Starr Fm*, November 8, 2017, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://starrfmonline.com/2017/11/there-is-no-god-humanist/>.

Statement of the Problem

Secular humanism is making inroads into the fabric of the Ghanaian culture and is challenging its Christian worldview. In its address to the Vatican in 2014, the Catholic Church in Ghana cited secularism as one of the greatest challenges to the growth of the church in Ghana.⁵

The reasonableness of the adherence of the majority of Ghanaians to the Christian faith is being brought into question. Secular humanism is mounting grounds gradually, and where it is even not able to win a person over from Christianity, it leaves such with some doubts about their faith. In the face of this threat, the subject does not seem to have been given much attention by the Christian bodies in the country. It seems the Christian Church in Ghana has not bothered itself much with the growth of this philosophical thought enough to look into the effect it has had on the Christian faith and the reason for its increasing strength.

Purpose of the Study

This work traces the history of Secular Humanistic thought in the Ghanaian culture and community and how far it has come. It mainly focuses on how it has related to Christianity and how it has affected it. Again, it takes a look at the factors that could have accounted for the progress this thought has made thus far.

The study provides a basis to predict the future of Christianity in Ghana if the trends remain the same. It further gives recommendations as to steps that could be taken to stem the tide. It provides materials for Christians to stand against this intellectual war that is being waged on Christianity. In agreement with G. Gresham,

⁵ Isaac Essel, "We Are Challenged with Materialism, Moral Decadence – Ghana Bishops Tell Pope," *Joy Online*, last modified September 25, 2014, accessed November 25, 2018, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2014/epetember-25th/we-are-challenged-with-materialism-moral-decadence-ghana-bishops-tell-pope.php>.

when Christians lose the intellectual battle in one generation, evangelism becomes almost impossible in the next.⁶

Scope of the Study

The first officially established humanist organization in Ghana was the Rational Center of Ghana (RCG) which was established by Hope N. Tawiah in 1980. He worked to promote secular humanism until his demise in 2009. The Humanist Association of Ghana (HAG), which was the next group to promote secular humanism in Ghana was established in 2012. The HAG indeed claims to have the mandate of continuing from where the RCG left off. This work covers the period beginning from 1980 when the RCG was established to 2015 which is three years after the HAG was organized. The three-year lapse gives time to evaluate the activities of the HAG.

The effect of Secular Humanism is felt across all religions. This study, however, focuses on its interactions and effects on Christianity. Geographically, the work focuses on Ghana. Secular Humanism has made inroads all over Africa having the humanist association in Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya, and South Africa among others but this work centers on Secular Humanism in Ghana.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in that fact that it documents the historical development of Secular Humanistic thought in the Ghanaian context as it interacts with Christianity. This gives the Christian world a clear picture of the effect of this philosophy on Christianity in the country. The study further brings out the weaknesses

⁶ David Lyle Jeffrey and Gregory Maillet, *Christianity and Literature: Philosophical Foundations and Critical Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 39.

within the fabric of Christianity in Ghana which proponents of Secular Humanistic thought have used as launch pads to infiltrate Christianity.

Lastly, this work is pioneering new ground in the historical development of humanism in Ghana. The interactions Secular Humanism has had with Christianity in Ghana is an area which is mostly unexplored; this work fills that gap.

Research Methodology

The analytical method is employed in this study. This work relies heavily on Bibliographic research. The Judith Thomas Library at the Adventist University of Africa in Kenya, the Daniel Buor library and the Walton Whaley library of Valley View University Techiman and Oyibi were visited for this study. Furthermore, other libraries such as the Balm library of the University of Ghana at Legon in Accra as well as the Trinity Theological College library in Accra were used for this work. Journals, Newspapers, and articles in magazines relevant to this work were also sourced from. Materials from the archives of the Ghana Humanist Association were also used.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter relies on existing scholarly literature to offer a historical account of the origins of the concept of secular humanism. The Chapter is divided into four sections. The first section explores a stipulative definition of secular humanism to guide the work. Sections two, three and four discuss the significant periods within secular humanism, beginning with the Graeco-Roman world, which is believed to be the cradle of secular humanism and the period it gained prominence.

It further navigates through the Renaissance and Reformation period where it resurfaced after the Middle Ages, then to the Enlightenment when it became well established and widely accepted and then it ends with the postmodern era when it blossomed. The essence of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive background to the origin of the secular humanist thought in recent Ghanaian culture. The chapter will serve as a pedestal upon which the main thoughts of the study will be explored.

The Worldview of Secular Humanism

This section looks at the nature of secular humanism and its worldview. The expression 'secular' etymologically comes from the Latin substantive *saecularia*, which, according to Lewis and Short, has the following main senses: (1) "worldly," "temporal," "profane," and (2) "heathen," "pagan."¹ There seems to be a conceptual affinity between senses (1) and (2), in that the former gives us some grounds to

¹ Charlton Thomas Lewis and Charles Short, *An Elementary Latin Dictionary* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1891), 1613.

understand the latter: ordinarily, something may be said to be, for instance, pagan or worldly when it is bereft of any supernaturality or transcendence.

The *Oxford English Dictionary*, gives the following dictionary meanings to secular: “Belonging to the world and its affairs as distinguished from the church and religion; civil, lay, temporal and pertaining to the present or visible world as distinguished from the eternal or spiritual world; temporal, worldly.”²

The New and Enlarged Handbook of Christian Theology also gives a theological coloring to understanding this expression. It says that this Latin root of the word could denote “a period of time,” “generation,” “decade,” or even simply “age.”³ It continues that in later translations of the New Testament, the Latin *Saeculum* came to mean “world” and it was from then that the word was identified with the temporal world as opposed to the spiritual world. *Saeculum* also expressed mundane human activities in this temporary sphere as opposed to spiritual activities as was identified with monastic life.⁴ In Christian circles, *Saeculum* was understood as relating to this “historical-temporal world.”⁵

The expression *Saeculum* was popularized within Christian circles by St Augustine of Hippo in his book, *City of God*. In the book, he presents two different cities; *civitas Dei* (city of God) and “*civitas terrena*” (earthly city).⁶ *Civitas Dei* in

² Angus Stevenson and Catherine Soanes, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of English* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1596.

³ Donald W. Musser and Joseph Price, eds., *New & Enlarged Handbook of Christian Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 454.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Péter Losonczi, Mika Luoma-aho, and Aakash Singh, eds., *The Future of Political Theology: Religious and Theological Perspectives* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2011), 15.

⁶ Robert Austin Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 59.

Augustine's work refers to a city which has God as its ruler. This city which has Christ at its center, however, is not a visible city restricted by physical boundaries because it extends to everyone anywhere who is loyal to God.⁷ Although this city runs concurrently with the *civitas terrana* here and now, it is at the coming of Christ that it will be fully revealed and then there will be peace and tranquility.

The *civitas terrena* refers to a city ruled by the institutions, governments, and thoughts of men; a celebration of human reason and judgments.⁸ Augustine referred to that human-centeredness of that city as *Saeculum*. Within Christian circles then, *Saeculum* meant the supremacy of human governments, institutions, philosophies, and judgments outside of the thoughts, will and ways of God.

In History, theologians have largely agreed to this understanding of the secular as brought on in the writings of Augustine. The expression 'humanism,' according to the *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, also means "a doctrine, set of attitudes, or way of life centered upon human interests or values ... a philosophy that rejects supernaturalism, regards man as a natural object, and asserts the essential dignity and worth of man and his capacity to achieve self-realization through the use of reason and the scientific method."⁹ Essentially "secular" and "humanism" have a similar sense of meaning; they are both anti-supernatural.

From the definitions given above, we can arrive at the following stipulative definition for secular humanism: a belief in human rational capacity and science as

⁷ R. W. Dyson, ed., *Augustine: The City of God against the Pagans* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3.

⁸ Peter S. Hawkins, ed., *Civitas: Religious Interpretations of the City* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1986), 107–109.

⁹ Merriam-Webster, "Humanism," *Merriam-Webster*, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/humanism>.

necessary and sufficient procurer of a productive and happy life without dependence on any divinity of a sort.

In this chapter, the research question is the following: Why does the secular humanist possess a worldview which gives human rationality ontological supremacy over any supernatural, transcendental being? This question received varied responses during the various epochs it has been asked. Nonetheless, the overriding concerns throughout these epochs have been fundamentally two foci (For convenience and retrospective referencing let us label them T1 and T2):

T1: The first is epistemological and it is the claim that religion, together with its belief systems and dogmas, is inadequate to account for the mechanics of nature and natural phenomena; and the exhaustive alternative that science and human rationality have the capacity to permeate through the abyss of nature and reality to represent the world and the universe in an intelligent and understandable manner.¹⁰ Thus, a world of religion conceived in conditions of divinity and supernaturalism contrasts with a scientific and rationalistic world.

Theologians claim that this refutation of religion and in this case the Bible, as inadequate to account for nature and natural phenomena is premised on faulty assumptions. Joseph P. Free asserts that the Bible does not claim to be a textbook on science¹¹ as **T1** assumes. That is to say that the Bible does not claim to teach science or that it holds all scientific knowledge. In the words of Galileo Galilee, it concerns itself primarily with matters of salvation and not science.¹² The theological claim

¹⁰ A. C. Grayling, *The God Argument: The Case against Religion and for Humanism* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2013).

¹¹ Joseph P. Free and Howard Frederic Vos, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 14.

¹² W. H. Jellie, *Dickinson's Theological Quarterly* (London, UK: Forgotten Books, 2018), 26.

seems rather be that scientific statements in the Bible are true and that the Bible provides the framework for better studying and understanding nature.¹³

The claim to a scientific monopoly over knowledge, called scientism, and which is articulated in **T1**, has also been contested as fallacious on the premise that there are other areas of knowledge that naturally do not submit to the scientific method.¹⁴

It has also been argued that the dichotomization between science and religion is artificial¹⁵ since both fields when viewed and used rightly, complement each other, exploring the works of God. Christian theology, therefore, questions **T1**.

T2: The second concern is moral. It asserts that the many problems which confront humanity betray a conception of God as all-benevolent, all-perfect, and ultimately good. The moral presupposition is that it is contradictory for a being which is believed to be supremely good and all-benevolent to appear to be indifferent to, or incapable of alleviating, the plight of it's supposed created or instantiated things or beings. This reechoes the Epicurean Trilema which says that the world does not tell of the existence of ultimate good, all-powerful and all-loving God.¹⁶

Responses to this in theological circles have been varied: Some believe that though God is ultimately good, all-loving and all-powerful, a world such as our own

¹³ Richard L. Mayhue, "Is Nature The 67th of the Bible?," in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2018), 2012.

¹⁴ Erkki Vesa Rope Kojonen, *The Intelligent Design Debate and the Temptation of Scientism: A Theological and Philosophical Analysis* (London, UK: Routledge, 2016), 4–5.

¹⁵ Daniel Buxhoeveden and Gayle Woloschak, eds., *Science and the Eastern Orthodox Church* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2011), 139; Simen Andersen Oyen, Tone Lund-Olsen, and Nora Sorensen Vaage, eds., *Sacred Science?: On Science and Its Interrelations With Religious Worldviews* (Wageningen, Netherlands: Wageningen Academic, 2012), 17.

¹⁶ Timothy S. Yoder, *Hume on God: Irony, Deism and Genuine Theism* (London, UK: Continuum, 2008), 140.

should make evil possible, others believe that evil arose from the permissive will of God whereas other sections teach that we may not understand this mystery now but it will be revealed in the future.¹⁷

These two concerns of Secular Humanism raised here, will be seen all through the epochs of history although one may be prominent in one epoch more than the other. The next sections offer a historical account of secular humanism.

Secular Humanism and the Ancient World

This section navigates through the history of secular humanism in the ancient world, particularly its conception in the Classical Greek period up to the Hellenistic period. The early beginnings of western philosophy date back to the ancient Greeks - to the Pre-Socratics philosophers of the 6th century BC onwards. The expression “Pre-Socratic” is an amalgam of the prefix “pre” (before) and the substantive “Socrates.” Accordingly, Pre-Socratic philosophers simply are those philosophers who came before the Athenian Greek philosopher Socrates.

The main difference between the Pre-Socratic philosophy and Socratic philosophy is that the latter concerns itself with morality, namely, how an individual can live a rationally moral life, while the former is concerned with finding a logical basis to understanding the origin of the universe as well as a scientific explanation to the phenomenal world. The Pre-Socratic preoccupied themselves with the analytic reconstruction of the empirical foundations of mythological or traditional Greek theology and religion.¹⁸ None of the Pre-Socratic work survived; what scholars rely

¹⁷ Alvin Plantinga, *Christian Faith and the Problem of Evil*, ed. Peter Van Inwagen (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 1–4.

¹⁸ Kofi Ackah, *Natural Theology in the Early Beginnings of Western Philosophy* (Accra, Ghana: Dwumfuor, 2013), i.

on are fragments¹⁹ and it is from these fragments that our knowledge of their worldview is gleaned.

It pervades through these fragments and testimonial that, according to the Pre-Socratic, the world could not be understood by merely reciting Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (two epical poems noted to be the source of Greek religion and morality) or following the will of Zeus and other Olympian gods. Accordingly, *doubt* about God as a supreme being, who is anthropomorphic (a God with essences of humanness like “father,” “caring,” “born,” etc.), omniscient and omnipotent, began with Pre-Socratic thinking. The doubt is of two strands, corresponding with the **T1** and **T2**.

Firstly, epistemological (**T1**). Some Pre-Socratic, including Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Diogenes, found it woefully inadequate the traditional explanations of the origins of the universe (cosmology). Having been dissatisfied with the explanatory power of traditional religion and theology about cosmology, which attributes everything to Zeus and other Olympians.

Thales, for instance, deifies and divinizes Water to be the source or first principle of all things. Like Thales, what is common among all the Pre-Socratic is to resort to human knowledge and reasoning to find a materialistic first principle or cause as the sufficient and final cause of the origin of the universe and everything in them.

Thus, these philosophers tried to identify God with different elements: Anaximenes and Diogenes of Apolonia with Air, Heraclitus with Fire, Pythagoras with Number, among others. Some scholars, including Hack, Burnet, Barnes, and Cleve, held that the Pre-Socratic' first principle (like Water, Air, Fire, etc.) could not

¹⁹ Fragments are those passages purported to have been the exact words of the philosophers of the Pre-Socratic era.

be regarded in Greek thought as God precisely because a god, according to Cleve, must “have a moral and emotional appeal,”²⁰ and therefore be considered “first and foremost an object of worship.”²¹

Against this view, other scholars, including Ackah and Hack, think that this assertion is a conceptual falsehood, giving that in Greek religious thought there were socio-psychological conceptions of god, including Love, Dream, Anxiety, Fate, who actually did not have moral and emotional appeal nor were they objects of worship, but were considered gods in archaic and classical Greece.²²

The second strand is moral (**T2**), and this is more peculiar with Xenophanes’ theology. Xenophanes’ theology directly challenged traditional religious orthodoxy. Ackah succinctly states that theology in the following way: “if the first principle/cause is what people call god, and this is essentially power, then polytheism and all the cultural and anthropomorphic representations of gods are illogical and false.”²³

Xenophanes’ attack on the traditional gods may prima facie seem to favor Christianity because it favors monotheism. However, his attempt aimed at de-anthropomorphizing God, to rid God of all human attributes such as “all-caring,” and “father.”²⁴ Again, a God, according to Xenophanes, cannot be born, if God is believed to be eternal and immortal. The underlying assumption is that when a being or an

²⁰ Felix M. Cleve, *The Giants of Pre-Sophistic Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 133.

²¹ John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. (London, UK: Meridian Books, 1930), 14.

²² Roy Kenneth Hack, *God in Greek Philosophy To The Time Of Socrates* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1931), 20.

²³ Ackah, *Natural Theology in the Early Beginnings of Western Philosophy*, 41.

²⁴ He is believed to have said that humans have conceived God to be like them, but if lizards were to have hands, they would equally have drawn God to look like a lizard.

object is said to be born or come-into-being, it implies that that being, or object is limited by time; that being was not in existence before being born. For instance, Xenophanes would have had a problem with Matthew 1: 23, concerning the “birth” of Jesus Christ, if indeed he is God.

Thus, it is quite clear that religious skepticism, at any rate, began with the works of these philosophers. Their works considerably influenced later philosophers including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other Hellenistic philosophers.

Socrates did not write anything, except what those who purport to have been his followers or knew him personally impute to him. Plato is purported to be Socrates' student and follower; Xenophon claims to have been Socrates' admirer; and Aristophanes, an Athenian comic playwright, is known to have been Socrates' critic. Both Xenophon and Plato claim that Socrates was more a religious person. However, Plato tends to make us believe that Socrates' religiosity was grounded in rationalism. In Plato's *Euthyphro*, Euthyphro (the dialogue's namesake) seeks counsel from the Athenian state attorney (the chief archon) to prosecute his father who had inadvertently contributed to the death of a slave. Socrates meets Euthyphro and learns of his intent to prosecute the father. Euthyphro claims complete epistemic understanding of all religious matters, and Socrates, therefore, submits himself to be taught by this self-acclaimed religious expert, in order that he (Socrates) may be able to justify his innocence against a similar charge of impiety.

During their interaction, Euthyphro confidently appeals to what he knew to be divine precedence to justify his prosecution of his father: Zeus “imprisoned his own father because he had unjustly swallowed his sons, and the latter too had castrated *his*

father for similar reasons” (*Euthyphro* 6a).²⁵ Socrates is skeptical about whether these stories about the gods, that is, whether gods, qua god, engage in any act of injustice. This is because Socrates believes that there is a triadic link between piety, rationality, and God: right thinking about God produces standards of behaviors that are inherently beneficial for human wellbeing.²⁶ To be holy then is to be morally rational. Scholars, including Vlastos and Ackah, believe that here, Socrates gives moral rationality a higher premium of value over any other extra-rational mode of knowing, including but not limited to, prophecy, dream, oracular declarations, hallucination.²⁷

In Plato’s *Republic*, the relationship between rationality, piety, and God is forcefully defended. Plato tells us that God is good, and that which is good does not admit that which is bad. Consequently, God cannot be the source of evil but only good things. It is in this light that it is often said that Platonic theology appealed constructively to the Church fathers and the Renaissance. However, it should be made clear that when Plato speaks about God, he meant his concept of Good, namely, an impersonal, unanthropomorphic metaphysical principle believed to have possessed the intelligence to cause the phenomenal world rational capacity to order the universe. What is trendy about Plato’s religious philosophy about his notion of the Good is that the idea of Good corresponds with degrees of rationality, a continuum. Those who can develop their rationality to the highest level can live a meaningful and orderly life, a life devoid of fear and anxiety, as belief in an anthropomorphic God, such as the

²⁵Adapted from the translation of Tredennick and Tarrant.

²⁶ Stephen O. Peprah, “God, Piety, and Happiness in Plato’s *Republic*.” Unpublished. 2018.

²⁷ Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Christian God, induces.²⁸ More concretely, good life or happiness supervenes on the exercise of moral rationality at the highest level, thereby implying that man can organize his life. To be holy or pious, according to Plato, is to devote one's life to the pursuit of moral rationality, which can be guaranteed by the right kind of education. For Plato, the traditional Homeric and Hesiodic gods could not be the source of morality, since these gods were known to have aided and abetted crime, rape, fight for supremacy, they could not meet his criterion of an all-perfect God. Consequently, piety as understood in connection with an anthropomorphic God, together with its ritualistic and cultic practices like prayers and sacrifices to this God, lacks logical and probative basis. In the same vein, Aristotle sparsely criticizes Plato's theology but remained committed to the idea of the Good as an impersonal being, construed in conditions of divinity, the pursuit of which makes the individual morally rational.

From the foregoing, it is becoming obvious that the rise of western philosophy challenged traditional religious beliefs. In actuality, there was an inscription at the Delphic Oracle that read: "*Know thyself.*" The import of this inscription was to remind humans, upon reaching the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, to be mindful of the limitedness of his knowledge about himself and the universe. However, the advent of philosophy created the impression that man could be deified and divinized when he exercises his intellectual capacity. This view again became more dominant during the Hellenistic period of Greek history.

The Hellenistic period followed Alexander the Great's conquest of Greece and later Rome, and the resultant political ideology of cosmopolitanism. Before these conquests, Greek citizens were living in a *polis*, in English parlance, a "city-state."

²⁸ Vlastos, *Socrates*.

Typically, the individual Greek identified himself with his polis, but not with the entire Greece society; an Athenian prided himself more like an Athenian than as a Greek, a Spartan Sparta. However, following these conquests, the Greeks now had to live in a cosmos, universe, with people especially those of Asia Minor, whom they had looked down upon as culturally inferior beings. Amidst this new wave of living, the Greek needed a new way of coping with the vicissitude of the cosmopolitan life. Philosophy, among others, availed itself as a means of providing guidance. Two of the dominant philosophies were Cyrenaicism and Cynicism, which respectively developed into Epicureanism and Stoicism. Aristippus, it is believed, founded Cyrenaicism. The fundamental doctrine of this philosophy was hedonism, namely, the idea that sensual and physical pleasure is the *summumbonum*, the highest good, of life.

Contrary to Cyrenaicism is Cynicism, which preached that virtue, without sensual or physical pleasure, is the highest goal of life. The Cynics grounded their philosophy on the assumption that a virtuous life is a life that is consistent with nature – nature being the entire universe. In other words, if the cosmopolitanism has detached one from the polis, the definitive essence of the Greek, living a virtuous life, without material pleasures, was both necessary and sufficient to make the individual happy; they preached indifference to civilization.

Two things are noteworthy about these two opposing philosophies: first, both interestingly appealed to Socrates as their model, with Cyrenaicism emphasizing Socrates' thought on pleasure, and Cynicism on Socratic virtue. Second, there is no mention of an anthropomorphic God as a source of comfort, except the Cynics' concept of “nature” which Stoicism deified. Stoicism refined Cynicism, just as Epicureanism was the heir to the tradition of Cyrenaicism. For the benefit of this

thesis, we will concentrate on Epicureanism. Epicurus followed Aristippus to argue that pleasure is the highest good in life. However, Epicurus added a proviso to the pursuit of pleasure: not all pleasures lead to pleasurable consequence; some lead to pain. Therefore, instead of the blind pursuit of pleasure as promoted by Aristippus (also called 'pleasure of the moment'), Epicurus introduced what is called "the hedonistic calculus," according to which an individual, upon ceasing a pleasure, must weigh its full consequences. If the positive pleasure outweighs the negative, then it is reasonable to pursue; otherwise, it should be abandoned. Epicurean hedonism is utilitarian in outlook.

Now, of greater importance to our discussion is Epicurus' notion of God in pursuing happiness, and pleasure. It is a well-known fact that according to Epicurus, fear is a hindrance to the pursuit of happiness. Fear is of two kinds, namely, the fear of God and fear of death.

On fear of God or the gods, Epicurus thinks that the gods exist, but they are indifferent to the plight of man. For Epicurus, the gods exist and live happily in the heavenly realm, drinking nectar and eating ambrosia. At best, their only relevance is to imitate their happiness; otherwise, to fear that they punish wrongdoing and that the evil will suffer in Hades are all conceptual and traditional falsehoods. To prove that fear of the gods is unfounded, Epicurus, appealed to the Pre-Socratic atomists, Leucippus and Democritus, to argue that the universe is made up of atoms, including the gods. His physicalist construal of the universe informs his notion of death. According to Epicurus, death is total annihilation, that is, the human being, composed of atoms, decomposes and turns into other atomic particles upon death. There is no soul to be punished in Hades. Accordingly, humankind should focus their attention on pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. Much emphasis is put on human's rational

capacity to live a happy life, other than an appeal to an anthropomorphic god; such an appeal is a hindrance.

From the preceding account, we have seen that throughout the ancient world, philosophy was the mouthpiece of secular humanism: much emphasis is placed on the human intellectual capacity to organize their lives and pursue happiness. Some of these philosophers' respective conceptions of God were presented more subtly to make it seem commensurable with the Christian conception of God, but it has been shown that higher value was placed on human intelligence.

Thus, with how secular humanism flourished in the ancient world. In what follows, the study shows how secular humanism flourished in the Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment Period.

Secular Humanism: Renaissance and Reformation

This section looks at Secular Humanism during the Renaissance and the role it played ultimately, in the Reformation. The ancient world was succeeded by the Christian era; this period saw the birth and the spread of the Christian faith which in time became the religion of the Roman Empire. Most notable at this time was the rise of the Catholic Church to become the center of life during the medieval period. The Catholic Church commanded the socio-economic, socio-cultural and the socio-political winds of the Middle Ages²⁹ so that at that time, the Bible and Christian theology became the source of truth and instruction.³⁰ The church so claimed

²⁹ S. Pejovich, *The Economics of Property Rights: Towards a Theory of Comparative Systems* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 1990), 8.

³⁰ Edward Grant, *God and Reason in the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 31.

monopoly over the knowledge that people who disagree with it, however scientific or rational their conclusions may have been, were persecuted.³¹

The middle ages, which saw the supremacy of the Catholic Church melted the lines between the secular and the sacred. Little room was left for rationalistic inquiry as was characteristic of the pre-Socratic and the Socratics. The determinations of the church were held final as they could not be contested by reasoning outside Christian theology as was understood at the time or by individual judgments.

The latter part of the middle ages, however, saw a great turn that dwindled the authority of the church and brought back the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans. There was renewed interest in studying the literature of the ancient world and this interest birthed that period in history that has been referred to as the Renaissance. The word “renaissance” is the French word for “rebirth” and it is used to designate this period in history when studies in ancient literature were revived.³² This interest revived the culture and worldview of the ancient Greeks and Romans.³³ Intellectuals such as Copernicus, Columbus, the humanist Leon Battista Alberti, and Erasmus, helped to revive ancient culture through the study of ancient literature.³⁴

Perhaps the most prominent figure of this age was Francesco Petrarch, recognized as the light bearer of the Renaissance and its pioneer humanist. When he discovered the letters of Cicero he was convinced that ancient literature were better sources of knowledge so he led the charge to revive interest in the studies of the

³¹ Galileo Galilei, *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History*, ed. Maurice A. Finocchiaro (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 297.

³² Charles G. Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (Cape Town, South Africa: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 19.

³³ Margaret L. King, *The Renaissance in Europe* (London, UK: Laurence King, 2003), ix–xii.

³⁴ William Caferro, *Contesting the Renaissance* (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 45.

original works of the ancient Greeks and Romans and by that he opened the door to the Renaissance.³⁵

A major concept of the renaissance as has been articulated by Jacob Burckhardt was the concept of the individualism which was created by the self-awareness which was awakened and discovery of man of himself and his place in the cosmos.³⁶ The Renaissance man held himself independent of external authority and judgments. The Renaissance was a time when the intrinsic worth of the human was once again celebrated and people began to judge the world and human life from a more positive light than the medieval times had taught them.³⁷ Leon Battista Alberti captures this trust in humans and their potentials when he wrote: “A man can do all things if he will.”³⁸ Such works as *On the Dignity and Excellency of Man*, by Giannozzo Manetti and *Oration on the dignity of man* also by Pico della Mirandola contributed immensely to this thought.

At the Renaissance, Humanism, more appropriately, *studia humanitatis*, referred primarily to studies in ancient literature.³⁹ Judging from the role humanism played in the Renaissance, humanism during the Renaissance can be defined as the revival of studies in the literature of the ancient world and a recognition of them as bearing the light of knowledge, wellbeing, and happiness. At this time, secular

³⁵ Carol Everhart Quillen, *Rereading the Renaissance: Petrarch, Augustine, and the Language of Humanism* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 2–5.

³⁶ Steven Lukes, “Individualism,” ed. Alan Ware, *European Consortium for Political Research Classics* (2006): 35, 36.

³⁷ Bard Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 4. Michigan is a state so the town should come before the state. The town is Grand Rapids, MI. Please apply to the whole work

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁹ J. J. Chambliss, ed., *Philosophy of Education: An Encyclopedia* (London, UK: Garland, 1996), 360.

humanism could be seen from a more epistemological (T1) point of view. Man trusted in man more than the supernatural, for his wellbeing.

The renaissance in many ways was the precursor of the Protestant Reformation.⁴⁰ The philosophical grounds prepared by the humanists of the Renaissance; individualism and the reliance on original sources, was the soil on which the seed of the Reformation was sown.

Bernd Moeller opined that without humanism, there would have been no Reformation⁴¹ and that was to say that the Reformation was a child of Renaissance Humanism. Martin Luther was heavily influenced by humanism though he never declared himself a humanist. The *studia humanitatis* opened his eyes to new approaches and methods and provided him with the necessary tools and grounds to launch the Reformation.⁴² His reading of Lorenzo Valla⁴³ on how the “donation of Constantine” was a forged document is believed to have been what pushed him to finally sever thigh with the Papacy.⁴⁴

Lorenzo Valla’s critique ridiculed the integrity of the papacy and questioned the morality and legitimacy of its authority. This was a major contributive factor to the fall of the Papacy.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ William Roscoe Estep, *Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 51.

⁴¹ Timothy P. Dost, *Renaissance Humanism in Support of the Gospel in Luther’s Early Correspondence: Taking All Things Captive* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2001), 233.

⁴² Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L’ubomir Batka, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2014), 98,99.

⁴³ Lorenzo Valla was a foremost humanist and a leader of the renaissance.

⁴⁴ Kolb, Dingel, and Batka, *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology*, 97.

⁴⁵ Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 99–102.

Humanism also challenged scholasticism which was the favorite of the scholars of the church so much so that it had been identified with the church. The rise of humanism, therefore, marked not only the decline of scholasticism but also interest in the things of the church. The reformers have been described by some as humanists who desired to break ways with scholasticism.⁴⁶

Renaissance Humanists have called the Middle Ages, the “dark ages.” Dark because human reason was submerged for the authority of the church, but they see the Renaissance as that which brought back liberty and progress.⁴⁷ The single greatest force or movement that could be identified in history as that which set the tone for and triggered the Reformation was Renaissance Humanism.⁴⁸ Humanism awakened individualism and private judgment, nationalism and a return to original sources. Humanism was indeed the precursor of the Reformation.

We see secular humanism at play during the Renaissance and the Reformation challenging established authority and promoting individual judgment. In as much as people at this time did not necessarily break away from religion as most of the humanist were still Christians and Martin Luther himself was a champion of Christianity, they were a lot more rationalistic.

Secular Humanism: Era of Enlightenment

The Age of Enlightenment is the aftermath of the Renaissance and Reformation and this section explore secular humanism during this time in history.

⁴⁶ Ismail Kurun, *The Theological Origins of Liberalism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), 19.

⁴⁷ Kathryn Hinds, *Everyday Life in the Renaissance* (New York, NY: Michelle Bisson, 2010), 5.

⁴⁸ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xvii.

Once again, the belief that human reason can manage its world gained much currency, especially with the new trend of scientific research and discoveries which characterized this time. The modern scientific and secular humanistic worldview of this time is more defined by the 'Scientific Revolution' of the seventeenth century (Enlightenment Period), and mostly in the ideas of Galileo, Francis Bacon, Descartes, and Isaac Newton.⁴⁹

From the foregoing discussion, let us look further into the preoccupations of the worldview of the Enlightenment era. Greek philosophy of religion, especially the Aristotelian, tremendously influenced the religious worldview of the Renaissance period as already discussed. The world was considered organic tracing itself to one supreme being of transcendental and immanent nature. As Crane states: "This organic world picture ... owes a vast amount to the works of Aristotle. ... In Aristotle's system of the world ... everything in the universe was seen as having a final end or goal, a view that was wholly in harmony with a conception of a universe whose ultimate driving force is God."⁵⁰

However, this worldview changed during the Enlightenment era. As Crane perspicaciously observes, "In the seventeenth century ... one important change was that the Aristotelian method of explanation –in terms of ends and 'natures' – was replaced by a mechanical method of explanation –in terms of the regular, deterministic behavior of matter motion."⁵¹ So, if the Enlightenment thinkers were asked the question that was posed earlier concerning why the secular humanist

⁴⁹ Tim Crane, *The Mechanical Mind: A Philosophical Introduction to Minds, Machines and Mental Representation* (London, UK: Routledge, 2003), 12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 12, 13.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

possess a worldview which gives science and human rationality ontological supremacy over any supernatural being, Crane will help us state their point of view clearly as follows: “with the mechanical world picture ... everything, organic and inorganic, did what it did because it was caused by something else, in accordance with principles that could be precisely, mathematically formulated.”⁵² In other words, the Enlightenment thinkers were secular humanists in their thinking for epistemological reasons (**T1**).

The world could not be understood merely by way of following the will of God or reading the Bible but through scientific research and human thoughtfulness. Thus, the mechanistic worldview is believed to have shaped the universe. For instance, across cultures and epochs, man is mostly conceived as a dualistic being, namely possessing soul and body. This view was challenged by the Enlightenment thinkers and their later followers. Human life was studied through a purely mechanical process. The discovery of the structure of the DNA by Watson and Crick in 1953 is a case in point. Consistent with our earlier discussions, the secular humanistic worldview has been moral (**T2**) but also very much epistemological (**T1**) and during the Enlightenment, it was much of the latter.

The forcefulness and flourishing of secular humanism in the modern/postmodern era are precisely premised on similar grounds as the ancient world, Renaissance and Reformation and the Enlightenment periods. Let us consider in the last section of this chapter the postmodernist view on secular humanism.

⁵² Crane, *The Mechanical Mind*, 12, 13.

Secular Humanism and the Postmodern World

We have seen so far how secular humanism has identified itself in the major epochs of (western) world history. Human reason and science unflinchingly contend religion on all fronts. Getting to the end of the twentieth and through to the twenty-first century, secular humanism became vibrant, especially in the western world. We see it prominently in the works of Richard Dawkins, Victor Stenger, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, Dan Barker, and A. C. Grayling. These men have done a lot to promote secular humanism in their works.

In his books; *The God Delusion*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, *Rivers out of Eden* and *Science in the Soul* among others, Richard Dawkins, ethnologist, and evolutionary biologist praises science and points to how epistemologically (T1) and morally (T2) belief in God and the supernatural is untenable. Victor Stenger, a physicist has also done a lot to dismiss religion in his works; *God: The Failed Hypothesis*, *The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning*, *God and the Folly of Faith: The Fundamental Incompatibility of Religion and Has Science Found God?: How Science Shows That God Does Not Exist*, among others. Stenger tells of religion as a babyish attempt by the ancients, when a man was yet to discover the scientific method, to explain natural phenomena. His arguments are mainly built on T1.

Daniel Dennett, Philosopher, and cognitive scientist have also done works telling of his field, to present cases against religion. In his books, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*, *Science and Religion: Are They Compatible?* and *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Dennet in Dialogue*, he is very critical of religious beliefs; his arguments are mainly epistemological (T1). In his *Caught in the Pulpit: Leaving Belief Behind*, he provides guidance and support for clergy who have lost faith in God and would want to leave religion.

Dan Barker, a former evangelical preacher has also become one of the most influential leaders of Freethought in America and a light bearer of secular humanism in the twenty-first century. In his books, *Losing faith in Faith, Freewill Explained: How Science and Philosophy Converge to Create a Beautiful Illusion*, and *Just Pretend: A Freethought Book for Children*, he shares his experiences to show how belief in God is fallacious and unnecessary. Most of the arguments of Barker are moral (**T2**).

The works of these people have significantly promoted secular humanism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. To summarize, the thrust of their arguments have been more epistemological (**T1**) although men like Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Dan Barker also makes some argument from the moral (**T2**) and it is the arguments from the moral that seems to be catching up the most.

Anthony Clifford Grayling, described as the most prominent humanist in the United Kingdom⁵³ will be used here to pointedly illustrate and summarize the modern/postmodern version of secular humanism and its stand on religion and religious beliefs. The twentieth and twenty-first-century version of postmodernism actually does not only take into consideration **T1** and **T2** but also proposes humanism, in general, to be an exhaustive alternative to religion's claim of absolute truth and knowledge of the compelling way to live one's life. Though Grayling acknowledges that religion may have done some individuals some good:

Religious faith has many manifestations. There are people of sincere piety for whom the religious life is a source of deep and powerful meaning. For them and for others, a spiritual response to the beauty of the world, the vastness of the universe, and love that can bind one human heart to another feels as natural and necessary as breathing.

⁵³ Stephen LeDrew, *The Evolution of Atheism: The Politics of a Modern Movement* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 47.

He believes that the evil religion has done far outweighs any good it could do,

Religious faith is neither so kind nor attractive. History attests to the weight of suffering that religious tyranny and conflict have together generated, from individuals struggling with feelings of sinfulness because of perfectly natural desires to nations and civilizations engulfed with war and atrocity by interreligious hatred. Religions have been cruel in their effects, and remain so today: homosexuals are hanged in Iran, adulterous women are beheaded in Afghanistan and stoned to death in Saudi Arabia, ‘witches’ are murdered in Africa, women and children are subordinated in fundamental households in the Bible Belt of the United States and in many parts of the Islamic World.⁵⁴

On this basis Grayling thinks that “the argument against religion is an argument for the liberation of the human mind, and the possibility of at last formulating an ethical outlook that all humankind can share, thus providing a basis for a much more integrated and peaceful world.”⁵⁵

On these premises, Grayling sets out to offer: “[A]n account of the better alternative to religion, the humane and positive outlook of an ethics-free from religious or superstitious aspects, an outlook that has its roots in rich philosophical traditions, yet is far more attuned to our contemporary world and far more sensitive to the realities of human experience, than religion is,”⁵⁶ and this is secular humanism. Secular humanism has come to be seen as a better alternative to building a better society than religion.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, we have navigated throughout different epochs to trace the roots of secular humanism. The purpose has been to provide a comprehensive background to examine the phenomenon in Ghana. First, we considered a stipulative

⁵⁴ Grayling, *The God Argument*, 1, 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 11. A world without religion will lead to human liberation because religion seeks to ensnare humanity

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

definition of secular humanism, namely, a belief in human and scientific efforts, other than a supernatural being, like God, to understand life and the universe. Beginning with the ancient Greek civilization up to the postmodern society, secular humanism as a phenomenon and sometimes a movement flourishes on two main premises, namely, epistemological (T1) **and** moral (T2). Epistemological, because secular humanists believe that the universe and human life cannot be understood by an appeal to a supernatural being. That is, the religious worldview which posits that a particular supernatural being is the source of all things, including man, is vehemently challenged by the secular humanistic worldview which believes in human cognition capacity and scientific research to understand the universe. Moral, because secular humanists consider it contradictory for a God to be the source of all things, and allow evil to prevail. Unforeseen circumstances like incurable diseases, disability, tsunamis that kill millions of people including the old, the young and the babies cannot be regarded as consistent with the existence of a benevolent and omnipotent God.⁵⁷ Upon this comprehensive background, the thesis moves on to examine the phenomenon in Ghana.

⁵⁷ Grayling, *The God Argument*, 11.

CHAPTER 3

HUMANISM IN GHANA

In the last chapter, we discussed how Humanism as a worldview has navigated its way through history and how it has come to establish itself in modern times. In this chapter, we will be discussing Secular Humanism as it relates to the African culture with an emphasis on Ghana. We will then look at Christianity in Ghana; its origins, developments, and trends over the years and its place in the socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic life of the nation. The chapter ends with a very brief history of irreligion in Ghana, considers the rise of Secular Humanism and the progress it is making in Ghana and how Ghanaians have reacted to it.

The Concept of Humanism in the African Culture

It has been argued that the African worldview is in several parts humanistic.¹ Mention to this effect has been made of the place of man in the African cosmology, the secular basis for morality in the African society, the communal structure of the African society and the nationalist movements that arose during the post independent era in Africa.

¹ Peter Slade, Charles Marsh, and Peter Goodwin Heltzel, eds., *Mobilizing for the Common Good: The Lived Theology of John M. Perkins* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), 8.

Mbiti describes the African worldview as one in which the cosmos revolves around the interests of man.² That is to say that everything in the universe exists for the interest and the purposes of man.

Mbiti further adds that the African ontology is largely anthropocentric as it views things from the point of view of humanity.³ This view places a high value on the human so that humans are the most relevant thing in the cosmos. The African worldview is also seen to hold humans as inherently good as opposed to the Christian view. The goodness of the human has been celebrated in several African adages.⁴ The place of humanity in the African cosmology is in this sense humanistic.

It has been argued again, that morality in the African culture is heavily anthropocentric. Humanism makes man and not God, the source of morality⁵ moreover, Kwame Gyekye argues that morality in Africa is humanistic in this sense. He makes the case that African morality is non-religious since there is no claim within the African religion that it is a revealed religion.⁶ Thus, the knowledge of right and wrong was not revealed to Africans from God. What determines what is moral then, comes from the aggregate of the experiences of the ancestors and the wisdom they left behind.

² John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (London, UK: Heinemann, 1982), 4.

³ Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*, 15.

⁴ Egbunu Fidelis Elejo, "Africans and African Humanism : What Prospects ?," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 4, no. 1 (2014): 297.

⁵ H. J. Pietersen, "Western Humanism, African Humanism and Work Organisations," *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology* 31, no. 3 (October 29, 2005): 54.

⁶ Kwame Gyekye, "African Ethics," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Fall 2011), accessed October 25, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/african-ethics/>.

The argument made here is that in traditional Africa, values are not based on revelation as is found in the Abrahamic traditions, neither are they based on rationalism as is found in the west, they are rather on-hand experiences gained by individuals and the community as a whole, and therefore they are heavily man-centered.⁷

Whereas scientific humanism looks to science and empiricism for truth, African humanism looks to the wisdom and experiences of the community in time and the laws of natural justice as they serve the good of man.⁸ Good is defined as that which has championed the good and the interest of the individuals in the community over time.⁹

The assertion by Kwame Gyekye that morality in the African culture is not based on revelation may be true, however, to say that morality in Africa is free from religion might not be correct. The African worldview is particularly theistic. The African, as Mbiti asserts, is adamantly religious and takes his belief everywhere with him.¹⁰ The lenses through which the African sees the world is purely religious. Perhaps Mbiti puts it best when he says that for the African, there is no rigid line between the religious and sacred so that every facet of life is spiritual.¹¹

⁷ Macaulay A. Kanu, "The Philosophical Background of African Humanism: The Genuine Way to Development," *World Applied Sciences Journal* 35, no. 9 (2017): 2015.

⁸ Macaulay A. Kanu, "African Humanism as a Socialist Solution to the Capitalist Underdevelopment Problems in Nigeria: A Philosophical Appraisal," *Pyrex Journal of African Studies and Development* 2, no. 1 (2016): 1.

⁹ Godwin.E. Azenabor, "African Humanism and the Challenge of Postmodernism," in *Consequentiality: Human, All Too Human* (presented at the International Conference, California, 2010).

¹⁰ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy* (London, UK: Heinemann, 1969), 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

The African believes in God as the originator and sustainer of the universe and as the father of all humankind.¹² What could be seen as humanistic however is how the divine and all divinities have been viewed from their usefulness to man. Humanity continues to remain large, the center of this worldview.

Humanism is also said to be seen in the communal structure of African society. One significant difference between the classical concept of humanism and that of the African is that whereas the Western concept has in history focused on education, individual achievements, and freedom, the African speaks of interdependence and communalism.¹³ Kwame Gyekye, speaking of this as “communitarianism” says the African worldview does not allow for isolated individualism, but the individual belongs to a community and is bonded with members of the community in shared values and interests.¹⁴

The communalistic and interdependence base of African humanism is captured in the South African word Ubuntu. This philosophy captures the spirit of togetherness, solidarity, participation, the place of a person in the community and interest in the common good.¹⁵ Ubuntu as a conception of African humanism also speaks of kindness and morally obligatory acts of wellbeing towards one's neighbors.¹⁶ Ubuntu philosophy which is held as what summarizes African humanism

¹² Elejo, “Africans and African Humanism,” 303.

¹³ Richard H. Bell and Jan Fernback, *Understanding African Philosophy* (London, UK: Routledge, 2002), 41.

¹⁴ Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 41–42.

¹⁵ Rita Kiki Edozie, *“Pan” Africa Rising: The Cultural Political Economy of Nigeria’s Afri-Capitalism and South Africa’s Ubuntu Business*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 88.

¹⁶ Adrian Pablé, ed., *Critical Humanist Perspectives: The Integrational Turn in Philosophy of Language and Communication* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 27.

says that “I am because we are.”¹⁷ The Africa worldview is a “we” worldview where the individual sees his interest in the good of the greater community. Good is what benefits the entire community.

African Humanism is also captured in the nationalist movements that arose in the early days of pre-colonialism in Africa especially, West Africa. These movements were championed by Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Ahmed Sekou Toure, and Modibo Keita.¹⁸ This was a time when there was the move to revive the Ubuntu philosophy to carve out a unique identity for Africans, fight for total independence and nationalism and champion African unity.¹⁹ Nyerere coined the term “villagization,” and Nkrumah coined “consciencism”²⁰ to say that the African notion of kinsmanship and communitarianism should be broadened beyond the family and the tribe to embrace the whole society. African humanism in this sense came to bear the meaning of Africanism, African unity and African identity. It was a movement that was to champion African values and ideas and to seek to find meaning to life and prosperity the African way. This movement has also been referred to as the African Renaissance.²¹

In this African Renaissance, we see people who believe in their capacity to build a better world. Their appeal was not made to religion but the African

¹⁷ B. J. Erasmus and H. W. Schenk, *South African Human Resource Management: Theory & Practice*, ed. B. J. Swanepoel, 4th ed. (Cape Town, South Africa: Juta Legal and Academic, 2009), 360.

¹⁸ Guy Martin, *African Political Thought* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 7.

¹⁹ Bell and Fernback, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 37.

²⁰ Vuyisile Msila and Mishack T. Gumbo, *Africanising the Curriculum: Indigenous Perspectives and Theories* (Cape Town, South Africa: African Sun Media, 2016), 61–62.

²¹ Elias K. Bongmba, “Reflections on Thabo Mbeki’s African Renaissance,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, no. 2 (2004): 291.

community as a unit believing that should Africans unite to serve their interests; they would be successful. This trust in human capacity has been called humanism.

African Humanism is summarized in the concept of Ubuntu. It sees the human interest as the supreme interest; this interest, however, is not individualistic but communalistic. The individual finds fulfillment in the good of the community. There seems to be the belief in the power of the unity of the whole to foster the progress of the African community. The bottom line remains however that in all, the African culture cannot be said to be humanistic in a secular sense since it is highly religious.

On the whole, though the African culture has been argued to be humanistic, there is little to show for that. The African ultimately interprets the world from a religious point of view and finds no dissonance in belief in the existence of God in the face of evil.

Humanism and the Ghanaian Culture

The Ghanaian culture as a subset of the African culture also has the individual at the center of reality. The Akan saying, *Onipa yede sen sika* which means humans are more valuable than money, speaks of the high value that is placed on the human. The culture also believes in communalism; this is seen in such sayings as *Nipa nua ne nipa* meaning humans are brothers to each other, *nipa hia mmoa* which also means humans need help and *Wo yonko da ne wo da*, meaning, what affects one person affects the other. The culture both upholds the place of man in society and collectiveness and interdependence. It thrives on shared value systems, social ethics and harnesses the powers of the divine for the good ends of man.²²

²² Hasskei M. Majeed, "On the Rationality of Traditional Akan Religion: Analyzing the Concept of God," *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 25 (2014): 127.

Gyekye explains however that the communitarian nature of the Akan community does not take away the rights and individuality of the person.²³ The individual does not lose himself to society but instead finds himself in it. In its senses both as communitarian and yet individualistic, the Ghanaian culture has been seen to be humanistic.

Morality in the Ghanaian society has been argued to be non-religious as has been discussed of Africa as a whole.²⁴ Anderson has however refuted that argument with the Akan saying, *Nyame mpe bone*²⁵ which means God does not like evil. Although the Akan culture does not claim to have received revelation from God, its value system and morality are based on the culture's understanding of what the will of God is. In the Akan understanding then, good and bad are determined by the will of God and this will of God gives peace to men.

The Akan culture may seem to hold a man in high esteem, but it holds God as the supreme ruler and the determiner of the fate of man. Sayings like *Nyame ye nea Ope*, meaning God does as He wants and such names of God as *Otumfuor Nyankopong*, which means most powerful God speaks of a God who runs the affairs of life. The Akan also call God *Oboade* which indicates the Creator. These affirm that the Ghanaian culture is very much religious and run on the knowledge of the existence of God and His involvement in the affairs of humans. The Ghanaian culture will be seen primarily as in disagreement with the fundamental principles of

²³ Kwame Gyekye, "Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies," in *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change Series II. Africa*, ed. Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2010), 101.

²⁴ Gyekye, "African Ethics."

²⁵ George Anderson, "Religion and Morality in Ghana: A Reflection," *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences* 1, no. 3 (September 2013): 162.

humanism. It recognizes God as the ultimate reality by whom all the phenomena of life are understood. It also sees God as the source of all things good.

Religion and Secularism in Ghana

Ghana is a highly religious nation. According to Pew research published in 2010, 88% of Ghanaians believe that religion is very central to their life.²⁶ Religion permeates through almost every facet of the life of the majority of Ghanaians.

As a nation-state, however, the article 17, 21(1)(b)(c), 35(1)(5)(6), 37(1) and 56 of its Constitution declares it secular. That is to say that the state is neutral to religious affairs. The nation will not be governed by the rudiments of any religious body neither will it be seen to be identifying with any religious organization. This provision, however, does not make Ghana an atheistic nation.

Despite the provision in the law, it is not easy to completely separate religion from the affairs of the state because of the cultural heritage of the Ghanaian people. Traditionally, leadership has religious significance so that the chief is not only one appointed by God but also as one who rules the people on behalf of God. This idea has been somewhat transferred to governance, and this can be seen in how people vying for political positions have positioned themselves as Gods choice. It is also worthy of note that the colonial rulers who set the tone for the creation of our modern state themselves were Christian in culture, so they wove religion into the fabric of the nation, this can be seen in how laws have Judeo-Christian undertones.²⁷

²⁶ Luis Lugo and Alan Cooperman, "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Pew Research Center*, April 15, 2010, accessed September 26, 2018, <https://www.pewforum.org/2010/04/15/executive-summary-islam-and-christianity-in-sub-saharan-africa/>.

²⁷ Elom Dovlo, "Religion in the Public Sphere: Challenges and Opportunities in Ghanaian Lawmaking, 1989-2004," *BYU Law Review* 2005, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 629.

The cultural heritage of Ghana makes distancing the state and its institutions entirely from religion and religious activities cumbersome. The religious heritage of Ghana reads itself not only into the leadership of the country but also into the very Constitution that makes the state a secular one. The preamble of the Constitution reads, “in the name of the almighty God we the people of Ghana, in the exercise of our natural and inalienable right.”²⁸ At the very opening pages of the Constitution, God is acknowledged.

Nyinevi tries to prove that Ghana has become a pluralist rather than a secular state.²⁹ He makes the point that a secular state is one in which the government stays entirely out of the way of everything religious as is seen in the United States of America. In a plural state as seen in Europe however, the government is involved with the affairs of the religious bodies in the state, but it does so without bias.

The government of Ghana does not distance itself from religious activities in the country, and it actively participates in some of them. Mention can be made of the non-denominational prayer that is made at the commencement of business meetings in Parliament. We can also talk of the Christmas and Easter holidays for Christians and same for Muslims during Eid Ul-Fitr and Eidul-Adha that the state grants. Again, it has been the tradition for sitting presidents and Vice-presidents to join Muslims to celebrate their festivals even as parliament has been holding carol nights at the eve of Christmas. Mention can also be made of the ban on drumming and noise making

²⁸ Government of Ghana, “Constitution of the Republic of Ghana,” *RefWorld*, accessed November 26, 2018, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5850.html>.

²⁹ Chris Nyinevi Esq, “Religion in the Public Square: A Law Teacher’s Perspective,” *MyJoyOnline.Com*, last modified March 12, 2015, accessed October 12, 2018, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/opinion/2015/March-12th/religion-in-the-public-square-a-law-teachers-perspective.php>.

during the *Homowo* festival in Accra, a practice which the government has not interfered with.

Perhaps the most recent incident of the involvement of the government in religious affairs is the move of the current president of Ghana to initiate the building of a national cathedral and the age-old practice of the government supporting pilgrimages to Mecca. The relationship between religion and the state in Ghana has some history; right after independence in 1957, the “Avoidance of Discrimination Act” was passed and has been upheld into the 1992 Constitution. This act in parts ensures that religion does not become a determinant of the rights and privileges of a citizen.³⁰ This was a move to secularize citizenship.

Though the state over the years has allowed for religious freedom, there are cases like the passing of the “Religious Bodies (Registration) Law” of 1989, PNDCL No. 221 which was meant to give the state the power to determine which religious body or church would be allowed to operate in Ghana. This law was openly resisted, rendered ineffective and had to be abolished by the 1992 Constitution.³¹

Ghana as a nation is a secular state but not secular in the sense that it is atheistic or that the state has nothing to do with religion. It is secular in the sense that it does not operate by any religious dogma. The very Constitution that declares it secular acknowledges the place of God in the Ghanaian society. Ghana can be said to be practicing civil religion given that national activities are painted in religious colors and national discourses couched in religious jargons. Lastly, Ghana could be said to

³⁰ William Burnett Harvey, *Law and Social Change in Ghana* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1966), 304.

³¹ Dovlo, “Religion in the Public Sphere.”

be pluralistic and not secular as the state actively engages the various religious bodies, albeit fairly.

Christianity in Ghana

The national census conducted in 2010 and published in May 2012 indicates that Christianity is the largest religious group in Ghana with about 71.2% of Ghanaians professing the faith.³² Given that the next largest group, Islam has a percentage following of about 18, Ghana is a highly Christianized nation. The religion permeates through the various tribes and region in the country although the northern part of the country has a more significant number of Muslims.

Christianity has contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of the nation. Christian churches are a significant stakeholder in education in Ghana.³³ Christian churches also contribute significantly to the health needs of Ghana with the Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG) running some 302 health facilities belonging to 24 churches in Ghana.

The Christian church has also contributed significantly to the politics and governance of the nation. It has contributed significantly to democracy by ensuring the freedom and the rights of the individual Ghanaian, fighting corruption and oppression.³⁴

³² Ghana Statistical Service, *2010 Population & Housing Census: Summary Report of Final Results* (Accra, Ghana: Sankofa, 2012), 5.

³³ Akufo Addo, "I Will Restore Control of Mission Schools to Churches," *MyJoyOnline.Com*, last modified November 11, 2017, accessed September 11, 2018, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2017/november-11th/i-will-restore-control-of-mission-schools-to-churches-akufo-addo.php>.

³⁴ Peter Addai-Mensah and John Opoku, "The Christian, National Development and Peace: A Ghanaian Perspective" (KNUST, n.d.), accessed September 23, 2018, <http://ir.knust.edu.gh/bitstream/123456789/5158/1/THE%20CHRISTIAN.pdf>.

Churches in Ghana have been exempted from taxes by the Internal Revenue Act, 2000 (Act 592). Altogether Christianity is very much alive in Ghana and is very central to its socio-political and socio-cultural structures and development.

Christian Missions in Ghana

January 20th, 1848 is acknowledged as the day Christianity first arrived on the soil of Ghana and indeed the whole of West Africa.³⁵ Don Diego d'Azambuja led an expedition of 600 men to Elmina where they presented Christianity to the chief of Elmina promising him material gains if he and his people should accept the religion and they did.

This team was however not able to make any significant impact on the land.³⁶ The major setback to this Catholic mission, however, was the capture of the Elmina castle by the Dutch³⁷ which forced the Portuguese to leave. It was not until 1879 when the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) took over missionary activities on the Gold Coast that Catholic missions made any significant inroads.³⁸

The Seventh-day Adventist Church made its way into Ghana through a tract that a native Francis, Dolphijn received from a ship captain.³⁹ It spent quite some number of years along the coast of the country but did not make much success until it

³⁵ J. K. Agbeti, *West African Church History: Christian Missions and Church Foundations : 1482-1919* (Leiden, MA: Brill Academic, 1986), 3.

³⁶ Brigid M. Sackey, "Evangelisation of Ghana: Historical and Contemporary Roles of Women," *Research Review of the Institute of African Studies* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 1999): 39–59.

³⁷ Peter Womber, "Elmina Castle: From the Portuguese to the British," *Academia*, last modified May 2015, accessed October 15, 2018, http://www.academia.edu/12943818/Elmina_Castle_From_the_Po_rtuguese_to_the_Bristish.

³⁸ Joseph Kwasi Addai, "A History of Divine Word Missionaries in Ghana: 1938-2010" (M. Phil thesis, University of Ghana, 2012), 28.

³⁹ Kofi Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-Day Adventism: A History* (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2005), 5–6.

finally moved into the Ashanti region in 1914⁴⁰ from when it began chalking significant missionary successes.

Up till the late half of the nineteenth century, neither the Dutch Reform Church, the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Churches nor the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which were the churches doing missionary activities in the Gold Coast had made any significant success stories. Their struggle arose not from resistance from the land but from diseases and their lack of preparedness.⁴¹

The struggle to plant churches in Ghana continued so that by the end of the Nineteenth Century, it is reported that what Christianity had to show for the years of toil were two Methodist, two Presbyterian, one Catholic and one Anglican Churches.⁴²

Aside from missionaries from the orthodox churches, Pentecostal missionaries who had connections with the Azusa Street revival of 1906 also made inroads to the country.⁴³ Churches such as the Assemblies of God and Christ Apostolic Church were founded by these.

By the mid-twentieth century missionary work in Ghana had intensified and successes were chalked so that by 1960, Christian missions in Ghana were receiving support from about 24 North- American mission outposts. By 1958, the work had so

⁴⁰ Robert Osei-Bonsu, "Sabbath Observance among the Akan's of Ghana and Its Impact on the Growth of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Ghana," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry (AAMM)* 7 (2013): 4.

⁴¹ H. W. Mobley, "The Ghanaian's Image of the Missionary: An Analysis of the Published Critiques of Christian Missionaries by Ghanaians, 1897-1965," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 1, no. 13 (1982): 20.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴³ Peter White, "Pentecostal Mission Spirituality: A Study of the Classical Pentecostal Churches in Ghana," *Missionalia* 44, no. 3 (2016): 251-262.

progressed that missionary activities were going on in almost every part of the country.⁴⁴

From the very onset, there were good relationships between the government of Ghana after the independence and the Christian missions. The first president of Ghana welcomed the activities of the missionaries but required of them to be accommodative of each other and to help with the social challenges of the communities.⁴⁵

Darkwa Amanor⁴⁶ chronicles Christian missions to the Gold Coast as this; The Roman Catholic missionaries under Dondiego D'azambja started in the 15th Century but yielded little results. The Moravian United Brethren Mission came in in the 1730s under the leadership of Chretien Protten and Henrich Huckuff presenting what has been seen as the first rigorous attempt to win the Gold Coast to the Christian faith. The Moravian brethren were followed in 1754 by the Anglican Church under Rev. Thomson who sent three native boys to study in Britain and to return to continue the work but only one of them, Philip Quacoe came back. This mission is recorded to have failed.

The Basel missionaries followed the Anglican missionaries in 1828 under Karl F. Salbad, Gotlieb Holzwarth, Johannes Henke, and Johannes Schmidt. The Basel compared to the earlier missions made great strides. The Bremen Mission followed the Basel mission closely, coming in 1847 and working mainly among the Ewe tribe of Ghana. Wesleyan missionary actives were the next to follow with the sending of the missionary Joseph Dunwell to the Gold Coast in 1835. He was supported by two

⁴⁴ White, "Pentecostal Mission Spirituality."

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Jones Darkwa Amanor, "Pentecostalism in Ghana: An African Reformation" (Th.D. dissertation, International Theological Seminary, 2013), accessed October 9, 2018, <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj13/amanor.pdf>.

natives, Joseph Smith, and William de Graft. The Wesleyan mission happened to be one of the most impactful missionary activities in the Gold Coast.⁴⁷

The coming of Christianity brought such incredible improvement and development to the life of Ghanaians. Amanor⁴⁸ outlines some of the significant things the coming of the missionaries brought. He mentions that it was the missionaries who laid down the foundations of our educational system, building some of the best schools we have till date; vocational and technical education specifically were begun by the Basel Mission.

He also mentions how missionaries developed the scientific study of the local languages. He shows that the modernization and commercialization of Agriculture were brought on by the missionaries, citing the botanical gardens of the Basel mission at Akropong Akuapen and the cash crop plantations of the Wesleyan missions. According to him the missionaries also contributed significantly to architecture, transportation and most importantly to modern means of healthcare.⁴⁹

What opened the door to missions in Ghana was not just the propagation of the gospel but the educational, agricultural and healthcare developments that came with it. Christianity spread through the country on the heels of education. Christian missionaries put up some primary and second cycle schools. The fact that many people who completed found decent jobs to do attracted people to the Christian church and their school and that helped the spread of the religion. Added to that, since most of the people who rose to positions of influence had been to school and had been proselytized, the outlook of the nation from the leadership became more Christian.

⁴⁷ Amanor, "Pentecostalism in Ghana."

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Through education, Christianity climbed into the higher offices of the land, it planted itself into the social structures of the nation and influenced the culture. Through healthcare and agriculture, Christianity won rural folks over with a better alternative to health and prosperity, over the traditional ways of doing things.

The Christian Church in Ghana

As Christianity is very much alive in Ghana, it exists with different emphasis in different denominations and groupings. Richard Foli⁵⁰ gives a typology of churches in Ghana. He talks about *the Historic Churches, the other Mission-Related Churches, the Pentecostal Churches, the Independent “Charismatic” Churches, and the Independent “Spiritual” Churches.*

The Historical churches are the mainline or orthodox churches that were established by the missionaries as discussed above. They include the Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Seventh-day Adventist and Catholic churches. These churches won people through their missionary activities but mostly through their social interventions and the schools that they established. The organizational structure and worship styles of these churches reflect that of the western world from where they came. They are more conservative and emphasize doctrines and holiness.

The Other Mission-related Churches refer to churches that were established during the second wave of missionary outreach to Ghana which took place from the 1940s.⁵¹ They include churches established through the efforts of the World Evangelization Missions working in collaboration with the Evangelical Church of

⁵⁰ Richard Foli, “The Ghanaian Church Scene Today,” 2011, accessed November 8, 2018, <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/GLOBUS/article/viewFile/22950/23487>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Ghana since the 1940s⁵² moreover, the *Good News Churches* which were planted by the Sudan International Missions which moved to settle in Ghana from Ethiopia in the 1970s. They also include the Church of Christ which came to Ghana in 1961. These missionaries focused their efforts mostly in the northern and rural parts of the country where the earlier missionaries did not entirely penetrate. They are also conservative but not western in their outlook and practice; they adapt to some touches of the native culture.

Perhaps the most interesting of the church groupings is the Pentecostal Churches which are also referred to as Classical Pentecostalism. It has been held in some quarters that Pentecostalism started with the coming in of the Pentecostal missionaries, Rev. Lloyd and Margaret Shirer to Ghana in 1931.⁵³ There is evidence to show however that it began of indigenous roots at an earlier date.⁵⁴

The Pentecostalism we see today has a long chain of influence from William Wade Harris of Liberia, John Swanston, Sampson Opong to Peter Anim. Harris is believed to be the one who laid the foundations of Pentecostalism in Ghana and his disciple John Swanston extended the work after him. Sampson Opong, a fetish priest who was converted to Christianity also won thousands of souls for the Methodist Church. Peter Anim is said to be the person who first led a church, his Faith Tabernacle Church, to receive what is described as baptism in the Spirit, in 1917.⁵⁵

⁵² Admin, "Ghana," *WEC in Africa*, accessed October 10, 2018, <https://www.wecinternational.org/where-is-wec/africa.php>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Amanor, "Pentecostalism in Ghana: An African Reformation."

⁵⁵ White, "Pentecostal Mission Spirituality."

Churches that are classified as Pentecostal churches in Ghana are the Church of Pentecost, the Christ Apostolic Church, the Assemblies of God Church and the Apostolic Church. Pentecostalism emphasizes the gifts of the spirit. It emphasizes the workings of the Holy Spirit in healing, signs and wonders and other such power encounters. It believes that supernatural occurrences come to confirm the presence of the Spirit of God⁵⁶it also believes in speaking in tongues as the manifestation of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁷ Pentecostalism is the most dominant branch of Christianity in Ghana today. It is believed that Pentecostalism gained roots in Ghana because the mission churches did not address the spiritual needs of the people. The need for protection from evil spirits and assurance of safety is what gave grounds to Pentecostalism.⁵⁸

The Independent Charismatic churches began somewhere in the 1970s.⁵⁹ These churches were formed either from Christian students' fellowships or as break-away from mainline churches. The pioneers of this movement include Nicholas Duncan Williams who began his church in 1979; he used to be a member of the church of Pentecost.⁶⁰ Mensah Otabil is another leader in this movement. He was a member of the Anglican Church before he founded his International Central Gospel church in 1984. Eastwood Anaba can also be regarded as one of the pioneers of the Charismatic movement in Ghana. He began the Charismatic renewal in the northern

⁵⁶ Peter White and Cornelius Niemandt, "Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches' Mission Approaches," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 24, no. 2 (October 2015): 247.

⁵⁷ White, "Pentecostal Mission Spirituality."

⁵⁸ White and Niemandt, "Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches' Mission Approaches."

⁵⁹ Foli, "The Ghanaian Church Scene Today."

⁶⁰ Paul Gifford, "Ghana's Charismatic Churches," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 24, no. 3 (1994): 242.

part of the country by starting his church there in 1987. Charles Agyin Asare began his Word Miracle Church in 1987. He was also a member of the church of Pentecost.⁶¹

The Charismatic church focuses on healing, prosperity, and word of faith. They teach that Christians are victors over the perils of the world; diseases, poverty, sickness, and death through the blood of Jesus Christ and therefore there should be no want for the Christian. Mainline churches and the Pentecostal churches consider them to have deviated from the core preaching of the gospel.

The Independent Spiritual churches fall into the category of African Instituted Churches. These churches are mostly built around a leader believed to have the gift of prophecy. They are preoccupied with demonic activities, witchcraft, and exorcism. They are believed to mix Christianity with elements of the African Traditional Religion. The National Baptist Church founded by Dr. Mark Hayford in 1989, is believed to be the first AIC in Ghana.⁶² Examples of these churches in Ghana include the Mozama Disco Christo Church, The Cherubim and Seraphim church, African Faith Tabernacle and the Church of the Lord Brotherhood.”

Challenges to the Growth of Christianity in Ghana

Statistically speaking, Christianity in Ghana can be said to be doing well. Christianity has had a loud voice and an impregnable presence in Ghana. With about 67% of the populace claiming to be Christians, some have even referred to Ghana as a Christian nation. There are however challenges the faith is faced with which are

⁶¹ Gifford, “Ghana’s Charismatic Churches,” 251.

⁶² Ibid.

causing it to lose some hold on the country and which is also opening up cracks to secularism.

The first challenge to be identified here is nominalism. It does not seem like the good numbers of people who claim to be Christians live up to higher standards of morality. Samuel Waje Kunhiyop in his article, “The Challenge of African Christian Morality” laments how as Christianity grows in Africa statistically, the African society gets increasingly immoral.⁶³ Christianity has failed to become that badge a person can wear to indicate his moral uprightness. Because of nominalism among Christianity, it is not telling convincingly how religion can help build a better, safer and more developed nation.

The editorial of an issue of the *African Journal of Evangelical Theology* identifies the challenge of Christianity in Africa as leadership; lack of adequate pastoral concern, lack of discipleship and training, and inadequate theological training.⁶⁴ Although Christianity has been growing in number, the competent pastoral leadership that would give the requisite nurturing, discipleship and training is very inadequate. Because of this, we have Christians who are not well grounded in the faith.

The last challenge to Christianity that will be presented in this work is dual allegiance. Sampson M. Nwaomah in his article “The Threat of Pluralism, Postmodernism, and Dual Allegiance to the Development of Biblical Spirituality in Africa” discusses how watered-down dual allegiance has made Christianity in

⁶³ Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, “The Challenge of African Christian Morality,” *Conspectus* 7, no. 1 (2009): 60.

⁶⁴ Editorial Board, “Challenge of African Christianity,” *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 22, no. 1 (2003): 1–2.

Africa.⁶⁵ Dual allegiance has been a challenge with Christianity in Ghana right from the beginning⁶⁶ moreover, it still lives with us today. This is a challenge because Christianity demands absolute allegiance.

Irreligion in Ghana

According to the latest census in Ghana, about 5.3% of Ghanaians claim affinity to no religion.⁶⁷ As a nation with about 94% of its populace identifying with one religion or the other, irreligion has been on the low in Ghana till recent times

Kwame Nkrumah

Perhaps the most prominent Ghanaian on the soil to profess a form of irreligion was Kwame Nkrumah. Kwame Nkrumah who was a student of theology gradually lost faith in God and claimed to believe instead in some impersonal energy or power that controls the cosmos.⁶⁸ His book, *consciencism* speaks of belief in the supernatural as inimical to progress. The book projects materialism as the path to prosperity and argues a correlation between religiosity and poverty.⁶⁹

In the book Nkrumah makes one of the most memorable statements against religion and belief in God; “Fear created the gods, and fear preserves them, fear in

⁶⁵ Sampson Nwaomah, “The Threat of Pluralism, Postmodernism, and Dual Allegiance to the Development of Biblical Spirituality in Africa,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 13, no. 1 (June 1, 2017): 72.

⁶⁶ Michael Ntumy, *African Pentecostal Missions Maturing: Essays in Honor of Apostle Opoku Onyinah*, ed. Lord Elorm Donkor and Clifton R. Clarke (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2018).

⁶⁷ Ghana Statistical Service, *2010 Population & Housing Census: Summary Report of Final Results*.

⁶⁸ Lang T. K. A Nubuor, *Marxism-Nkrumaism: Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s Application of Marxism to Africa*, Philosophical Consciencism, November 11, 2014, accessed September 30, 2018, <https://marxistnkrumaistforum.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/philosophical-consciencism-bankole-akpata-i.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution* (New York, NY: Monthly Review, 1964), 13.

bygone ages of wars, pestilence, earthquakes, and nature gone berserk, fear of acts of God. Fear today of the equally blind forces of backwardness and rapacious capital.”⁷⁰ In this Nkrumah reiterates the age-old argument that humans created the idea of God out of their misapprehension of the cosmos. It must be noted that though Nkrumah laid some philosophical foundations for irreligion in Ghana and indeed the whole of Africa, he did not entirely preach it actively so that it did not become a high point of interest in his day.

The Rational Center of Ghana (RCG)

The next known figure to profess irreligion and who unlike Nkrumah was evangelical with his irreligion was Hope Nuerter Tawia. He was born and nurtured a Christian but lost faith in Christianity when he did not have some pertinent questions answered. He founded and chaired the RCG through the help of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) and African Americans for Humanism (AAH). He also served as a member of the AAH Advisory board. The RCG had as its motto, “Down with superstition.”⁷¹ Superstition here should be understood as a belief in the supernatural.

Tawia was able to convert his cousin, Nortey Kwesi Orgle and Nii Oto Kwame who was a traditional chief.⁷² He worked among tertiary students holding a series of lectures on university campuses, though the attendance was mostly not very encouraging. His biggest dream was to build a library that would make materials on free-thinking available to the public. This plan, however, failed partly because Nii Oto

⁷⁰ Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 14.

⁷¹ Nii Noi Vanderpuye, “Hope Nuerter Tawia: A Little Piece of Rational Thinking Is Dead,” *International Humanist News*, November 2009, 33, 34.

⁷² *Ibid.*

Kwame could not secure him the land he promised to donate towards the project and also because he passed away on September 27, 2009.⁷³

Hope Tawiah did not leave much behind beside the fact that he was able to lobby to get two college students from Ghana to Brussels for an IHEU Congress with the hope that they will carry on from where he leaves off, one of those who was sponsored was Nii Noi Vanderpuye.⁷⁴

Hope Tawia did not have people immediately take off from where he left off. We do not read of any of his converts continuing his works after him. However, research on atheism in Ghana done in 2008 proved that irreligion, religious doubt, and atheism had found roots in the Ghanaian society and was beginning to flourish. The research could not establish exactly how widespread it was and the rate of growth because it said that many people who were irreligious did not want to identify themselves as such.⁷⁵

There is nothing in the report that traced the progress of secularism and irreligion to the activities of the RCG, but it does establish that during the lifetime of Hope Tawia, irreligion was beginning to gain holds in Ghana.

The Humanist Association of Ghana (HAG)

The next group to champion irreligion and secularism in Ghana and which happens to be a lot more organized and focused, with some comparatively significant success in Ghana is the HAG. The HAG has as its motto, “*challenging superstition in the pursuit of human dignity and compassion.*” The Association describes itself as an

⁷³ Vanderpuye, “Hope Nuerthey Tawia.”

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Phil Zuckerman, ed., *Atheism and Secularity* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2009), 84, 85.

association of people living in Ghana, who believe in the creation of a better society through reason, science, and regard for human dignity.⁷⁶ Members refer to themselves as “an international volunteer organization of atheists/agnostics living in Ghana who subscribes to humanism as a life stance.”⁷⁷ Thus, the association reveals itself as a Secular Humanist Association.

The association was birthed from a web of freethinkers that began on social media in 2012 under the name ‘Freethought Ghana,’ an 11 member coalition of agnostics and atheist.⁷⁸ The group was mobilized from social media through the leadership of Graham Knight that same year to host the first ever West African Humanist Conference in Accra.⁷⁹ The hosting of this conference was a success that shot the group into the limelight and gave it some good footing.

One other thing that helped bolster the group was the kind of speakers they had at this first conference. These speakers included Prof. Raymond Nonnatus Osei, Associate Professor in Classics and Philosophy at the University of Cape Coast and one-time dean of the faculty of Arts of the university and Nana Oye Lithur who later became the minister of Gender and Social Protection of the Republic of Ghana.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Admin, “About Us,” *Humanist Association of Ghana*, February 12, 2012, accessed November 14, 2018, <https://ghanahumanists.wordpress.com/about/>.

⁷⁷ Admin, “Humanist Association of Ghana,” *Facebook*, accessed August 16, 2018, https://web.facebook.com/humanistsGH/posts/2054985578066177?_rdc=1&_rdr.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Roslyn Mould, “President of the Humanist Association of Ghana; Chair of the African Working Group (IHEYO),” interview by Scott Douglas Jacobsen, *Humanist Voices*, May 6, 2017, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://medium.com/humanist-voices/interview-with-roslyn-mould-president-of-the-humanist-association-of-ghana-chair-of-the-african-2fed02c76b17>.

⁸⁰ International Humanist and Ethical Union, “West African Humanism in Action” (presented at the International Conference, Accra, Ghana: International Humanist and Ethical Union, 2012), accessed September 28, 2018, <https://iheu.org/international-conference-west-africanhumanism-in-action-accra-ghana-23-25-november-2012/>.

It was after the successful conference that the group was officially organized into an association under the name, Humanist Association of Ghana in 2015.⁸¹ The Association is a member of the IHEU. Most interestingly, it claims to have the mandate to continue the work Hope Tawia began with his RCG over four decades ago.⁸²

The HAG successfully held another Humanist conference in Accra in 2014 to discuss issues on health, technology and the rights of homosexuals.⁸³ This is in keeping with spreading the message that science and rationality rather than religious dogma are better tools for building a better society. With the success of these conferences and the extensive media reportage they receive, the Association is making quite smooth inroads into the media space in Ghana.

The strength of the association was again reinforced locally and internationally when its first president, Roselyn Mould was elected to the International Humanist and Ethical Youth Organization (IHEYO).⁸⁴ Michael Osei-Assibey currently serves as president to the Association.⁸⁵ Both Michael and Roselyn were born and raised Christians, but they claim that they found inconsistencies in the teachings of the religion and also found it incoherent with science and the laws of nature.

⁸¹ Admin, "About Us."

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Leo Igwe, "Humanist Fellowship Has Arrived in Ghana," *News Ghana*, last modified December 9, 2014, accessed November 22, 2018, <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/humanist-fellowship-has-arrived-in-ghana/>.

⁸⁴ Humanist Association of Ghana, "First Ghanaian Elected to International Humanist Organization," *Modern Ghana*, last modified August 21, 2014, accessed September 22, 2018, <https://www.Modernghana.com/news/565051/first-ghanaian-elected-to-international-humanist-organisatio.html>.

⁸⁵ Michael Osei-Assibey, "President, Humanist Association of Ghana (Part 1)," interview by Scott Douglas Jacobsen, *Humanist Voices*, May 8, 2017, accessed September 27, 2018, <https://medium.com/humanist-voices/interview-with-roslyn-mould-president-of-the-humanist-association-of-ghana-chair-of-the-african-2fed02c76b17>.

Aims of the humanist association of Ghana. The Aims of the Humanist

Association of Ghana as given by them are these;

1. To promote an ethical life based on reason and human values.
2. To support human rights in the belief that all people are worthy of respect as long as they are not infringing on the rights or well-being of others.
3. To promote science and critical thinking as the primary ways to understand the world.
4. To transcend divisive loyalties based on race, religion, gender, politics, nationality, class and ethnicity.
5. To support an open, pluralistic and diverse society.
6. To support our secular state that guarantees freedom of religion for all.
7. To provide a support network for those who have no religious beliefs or wish to question their own received assumptions
8. To work with all individuals and organizations with whom we share common concerns.
9. To promote the separation of religion and state.⁸⁶

The background to these aims or rather central to achieving these aims is promoting irreligion.⁸⁷

Over the past years, the Association has been very active on social media as well as in the traditional media. Its social media page has been reporting on its various activities and has been inviting people to its monthly meetings. The monthly meetings are focused on intellectually stimulating, developmentally oriented and social protection talks and discussions so that it attracts young professionals, intellectuals and university students. The 'fresh' ideas, warm fellowship and sense of

⁸⁶ Admin, "About Us."

⁸⁷ Michael Osei-Assibey, "President, Humanist Association of Ghana (Part 2)," interview by Scott Douglas Jacobsen, Humanist Voices, May 9, 2017, accessed September 22, 2018, <https://medium.com/humanist-voices/interview-with-roslyn-mould-president-of-the-humanist-association-of-ghana-chair-of-the-african-2fed02c76b17>.

empowerment that comes with the meetings make it welcoming to most intelligent minds.

Activities of the humanist association of Ghana. Aside from the monthly meetings, the association is also making use of the traditional media space. It is now common not only to come across their materials on the various blogs but also to hear them on radio and television. Through the media space and on the ground, the association has been preaching secular humanism through humanitarian activities, gender and LGBT activism and direct public denunciation of religion.

Humanitarian activities. The Association has been helping basic schools with books under a project called “Book Drive.”⁸⁸ This is a move that aimed at helping kids to develop a love for reading, and that would also help hone their critical thinking skills. They have plans for extending this project to other schools. The association aims to forge partnerships with these schools by establishing “Freethought and Astronomy clubs” in the schools.⁸⁹

As good as it is to build a love for reading and critical thinking skills in kids, these clubs would be mediums of preaching secular humanism. Just as schools were used to propagate the gospel, this could also be a means to propagate irreligion. We should understand the focus of secular humanism on Science is to pitch it against religion and present it as a better means of building society.

The Association has also been working in the Northern part of the country among people who have been ostracized as witches and banished to witch camps. The

⁸⁸ Humanist Association of Ghana, “Humanist Association of Ghana’s Book Drive,” last modified October 18, 2017, accessed November 22, 2018, <http://ghanahumanists.org/humanist-association-ghanas-book-drive/>.

⁸⁹ Roselyn Mould, “Recent Activities of the Humanists Association of Ghana (HAG),” *Humanist Association of Ghana*, last modified August 16, 2016, accessed November 22, 2018, <http://ghanahumanists.org/recent-activities-of-the-humanists-association-of-ghana-hag/>.

ordeal that people accused of witchcraft go through and the witch camp phenomenon is a big issue in Northern Ghana, and it would seem a good move if any group of people should go to the aid of these victims.

The case is however that as the association tries to help these victims, it takes occasion to blame their ordeal on religion for teaching people that there are such things as spirits and demons. Leo Igwe in an article calling on individuals and organizations to help the association in their work among these victims takes a jab at the efforts of Christian groups in the area to help.⁹⁰ He describes them as not able to help since they hold on to beliefs that perpetuate the phenomenon.

The Association uses the occasion of extending hands to these victims as opportunities to present humanism as the better option for building a better society. To them, there cannot be God in the face of all that these victims are facing, and if people relied on science and not the supernatural to understand the world, they would not have accused others as witches and the source of their woes.

The humanitarian services the association is involved in are therefore present the opportunities for it to reach out the more to the higher number of people and to sell its message.

Gender activism. One of the issues the association has been pushing in the media space is gender equality and Feminism. Roslyn Mould makes the point that “the feminist agenda” is paramount to the overall agenda of the Humanist Association of Ghana.⁹¹ She claims this is seen in how half of the female members of the

⁹⁰ Leo Igwe, “Child Witches in Ghana,” *Humanist Association of Ghana*, last modified January 19, 2016, accessed November 23, 2018, <http://ghanahumanists.org/child-witches-in-ghana/>.

⁹¹ Carlos Alfredo Diaz and John Hamill, “AAI Gender Balance Report,” *Atheist Alliance International*, last modified March 6, 2016, accessed November 23, 2018, https://www.atheistalliance.org/userdata/documents/AAI_Gender_Balance_Report.pdf.

association have been given executive positions though they form 8% of the total membership.

It is not the intent of this paper to discuss the biblical stance on the issue but to recount how the association has been using this case to battle Christianity in the country. There is the claim of a link between freethought and Feminism.⁹² Secular thought or Freethought is believed to be what has promoted the rights of the woman in society.

Describing the Ghanaian culture as misogynistic, Roslyn in a report builds the case that women have suffered from the traditional teachings of Islam and Christianity regarding the place of the woman.⁹³ These narratives add to the view that the Christian worldview is not the best-fit worldview that prospers the human race and builds a better, safer and prosperous society for all.

In a postmodernist and pragmatist culture where people look for what works for them rather than what is necessarily true, this projection of Christianity as against the wellbeing of the woman paints a picture of Christianity as archaic and not in keeping with reality.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activism. The question of homosexuality has become very hot in recent years in Ghana, and HAG has been right at the center of the debate. The fight for the protection of the rights of homosexuals began right from the onset. At their first-ever international conference in 2012, Nana Oye Lithur made the case that homosexuality is not a crime in Ghana and that

⁹² Diaz and Hamill, "AAI Gender Balance Report."

⁹³ Roselyn Mould, "A Woman in Ghana Today," *Humanist Association of Ghana*, last modified August 23, 2016, accessed November 23, 2018, <http://ghanahumanists.org/a-woman-in-ghana-today/>.

homosexuals just like any other people have their rights guaranteed under the laws of the land.⁹⁴

In a statement put out by the Humanist Association of Ghana in July 2015, the Association condemned attacks on homosexuals and called for the protection of their rights.⁹⁵ The statement claims that the African culture is not anti-gay and that disaffection for homosexuality was planted by “bigoted, homophobic Judeo-Christian missionaries in Africa.” The statement thus accuses Christianity as what has come to take away the rights of people and turned Ghanaians against each other in matters of sexual orientation.

Also, at the 37th session of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations held from 26 February to 23 March 2018, a statement read by the IHEU on behalf of the Humanist Association of Ghana advocated for the rights of LGBT in Ghana.⁹⁶ The statement condemned attempts made by Politicians and religious bodies to perpetuate disaffection for homosexuality in Ghana and called on the nation to embrace homosexuality.⁹⁷

Agomo Atambiri, the current organizing secretary of the Association, says that though the association aims to combat religion in the country, it does so strategically

⁹⁴ Humanist Association of Ghana, *Report from the International Humanist Conference 2012* (Accra, Ghana, January 8, 2013), accessed September 23, 2018, <http://ghanahumanists.org/report-from-theinternationalhumanistconference-accra-2012/>.

⁹⁵ Humanist Association of Ghana, “Humanist Association of Ghana Decries Homophobia,” *Ghana Web*, last modified July 7, 2015, accessed September 23, 2018, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Humanist-Association-of-Ghana-Decries-Homophobia-366944>.

⁹⁶ Elizabeth O’Casey, “International and Ghanaian Humanists Call on Ghana to Respect Human Rights in Face of Traditional Practices,” *Humanists International*, March 20, 2018, accessed September 23, 2018, <https://humanists.international/2018/03/international-ghanaian-humanists-call-ghana-respect-human-rights-face-traditional-practices/>.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

and not so directly. He says that the advocacy the group makes for the LGBT is done as a means of launching an indirect attack on religion.⁹⁸

Critique of religious belief. HAG aims to free the minds of people from all religious dogma and to promote freethought, logic, and reason and the scientific method. That is why it has made statements and acted in ways that openly critique religious belief especially Christianity.

In 2015, the Association brought out a statement supporting Mzbell, a Ghanaian musician who in an interview had said that she no longer believed in the story of Jesus because she had found it to be historically problematic. In the statement, the association applauded her independence of thought and condemned religious stance which according to them is not progressive and does not allow people to seek knowledge.⁹⁹ The statement said that the belief that any religion or scripture is infallible is toxic.¹⁰⁰

Again, in an interview on Star FM which happens to be one of the favorite stations among the elite in the capital city of Ghana, Michael Assibey accused Christianity as the bane of retarded development in Ghana.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Scott Douglas Jacobsen, "In Conversation with Agomo Atambire — Organizing Secretary, Humanist Association of Ghana," *Medium*, February 13, 2018, accessed September 24, 2018, <https://medium.com/humanist-voices/in-conversation-with-agomo-atambire-organizing-secretary-humanist-association-of-ghana-8a3357a79cd5>.

⁹⁹ Graham Knight, "Humanists Back Mzbel to Denounce Christ; Say She Must Be Applauded Not Condemned," *MyJoyOnline.Com*, last modified February 26, 2015, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/entertainment/2015/february-26th/humanists-back-mzbel-to-denounce-christ-say-she-must-be-applauded-not-condemned.php>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Nii Smiley Byte, "'The Idea of God Is a Receding Packet of Ignorance' - President Of Ghanaian Humanist Association," *GhanaCelebrities.Com*, November 8, 2017, accessed September 24, 2018, <https://www.ghanacelebrities.com/2017/11/08/idea-god-receding-packet-ignorance-president-ghanaian-humanist-association/>.

This news item was picked up by quite many radio stations and generated some discussions on social media causing people to analyze and comment on how Christianity could have progressed or retarded the nation.

The Association went to the campus of the University of Ghana in September 2018 to engage students in freethought. In their report, they said that students were receptive of them and some of their ideas.¹⁰² They reported that though the students held different views regarding homosexuality, they agreed that there was the need to find better grounds for determining what is right from wrong and they see that as an excellent starting point.

They reported that they have seen that going straight with an atheistic agenda will not endear them to students. Therefore, they will begin with discussions on how to verify truth from falsehood and that they believe would “lead them to question faith, gods, religion, gender narratives, economics and even the state and society itself.”¹⁰³

The report ends with a call to other freethought groups to get on board and to lecturers who share similar views to share them with students in the classroom as they see much prospects for humanism on the campus.¹⁰⁴ Once again schools are being used as centers to reclaim people from religious belief as it was used to win people into Christianity by the missionaries.

¹⁰² Humanist Association of Ghana, “Creating Freethought Spaces in Our Universities – The University of Ghana Experiment,” *Facebook*, last modified September 6, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/notes/humanist-association-of-ghana/creating-freethought-spaces-in-our-universities-the-university-of-ghana-experime/2308388786059187/>.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

The common-sense foundation (CSF). The Humanist Association of Ghana has given birth to another group that is known as the Common-Sense Foundation based in Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana. This organization was established in 2014 by Kwaku Adusei.¹⁰⁵ Adusei claims that religion makes slaves of people and though the youth have discovered this, they need much encouragement to come out of it, and the foundation has come to provide that.¹⁰⁶

The foundation has been involved in promoting humanism through radio programs, seminars and vacation classes for students.¹⁰⁷ The CSF has a special focus on young people below the age of 15. It believes that older people have their minds made up already so attention should be focused on the younger generation.¹⁰⁸

HAG has so far been the most visible and active promoter of humanism and irreligion in Ghana. It is a Secular Humanist group that is rising and through humanitarian services, gender activism and LGBT advocacy and direct public critiques of religious belief and Christianity, it is slowly pushing itself up as a challenge to Christianity in Ghana.

¹⁰⁵ Kwaku Adusei, "The Common Sense Foundation - Humanism in Kumasi, Ghana," *Humanist Association of Ghana*, July 16, 2016, accessed September 24, 2018, <http://ghanahumanists.org/the-common-sense-foundation-humanism-in-kumasi-ghana/>.

¹⁰⁶ Scott Douglas Jacobsen, "An Interview on Losing Religion and Finding Humanism in Ghana," *Conatus News*, last modified August 23, 2017, accessed September 24, 2018, <https://conatusnews.com/interview-kwaku-adusei/>.

¹⁰⁷ Adusei, "The Common Sense Foundation - Humanism in Kumasi, Ghana."

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Attitude of Ghanaians towards Secular Humanism

A study on atheism in Ghana conducted in 2008 revealed that Ghanaians are critical of persons who identify as non-religious.¹⁰⁹ The study, however, demonstrated that there is no reason to believe that a non-religious person would be physically assaulted in Ghana.

In agreement with the status of the nation as a secular state that guarantees the freedom of belief of every citizen, persons of irreligion do not feel that their lives are in danger.¹¹⁰ There is evidence to the effect however that people who identify as irreligious could be stigmatized and verbally assaulted. Mention can be made of the massive condemnation the Ghanaian musician who is known in showbiz as Wanlov the Kubolor often receives for his constant condemnation of religion and denunciation of Christianity.¹¹¹

Atambiri also asserts that people who profess irreligion in Ghana are most times abandoned by their families.¹¹² A report on members of HAG reveals that quite a number of them have been cut off from their families and others even claim they have received death threats.¹¹³ They report that it could be a lonely life to live as a non-religious person in Ghana.

¹⁰⁹ Zuckerman, *Atheism and Secularity*.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Albert Benefo Boabeng, "I Don't Believe in 'Blasphemy' – Wanlov the Kubolor," *Entertainment*, last modified September 15, 2015, accessed September 24, 2018, <https://www.pulse.com.gh/ece-frontpage/controversy-i-dont-believe-in-blasphemy-wanlov-the-kubolor/ewlzzbb>.

¹¹² Jacobsen, "In Conversation with Agomo Atambire — Organizing Secretary, Humanist Association of Ghana."

¹¹³ Stacey Knott, "The Lonesome Life of Atheists in Deeply Religious Ghana," *GMA News Online*, last modified December 24, 2016, accessed September 24, 2018, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/593586/lifestyle/the-lonesome-life-of-atheists-in-deeply-religious-ghana/>.

It must be said also that there is evidence that not all Ghanaians so much reject the idea of non-religion. Studies have shown that some Ghanaians, especially in urban areas, are developing some interest in irreligion.¹¹⁴ The visit of HAG to the campus of the University of Ghana reveal students who are eager to experiment with other worldviews that challenge traditional narratives.¹¹⁵

The founder of the CSF who reports that people tried to kill him when he came out with his irreligious views also says that he used to receive lots of calls from people who wanted to learn more about his beliefs after every radio program.¹¹⁶ He tells of how that was a motivating factor in forming the foundation.

In as much as there is hostility towards irreligion in the country because people do not seem to understand how a person could live without God, there is some growing curiosity and a looking for alternate worldviews among the youth and those living in the urban centers. The Ghanaian mind is not so much repugnant of secular views as one might think it is.

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that secular humanism is on the rise in Ghana as it began from the philosophical foundations of Kwame Nkrumah to the proselytizing efforts of Hope Tawiah and now the efforts of HAG and its CSF. HAG has been doing well at achieving its aims, working on projects that seem to be fighting for the

¹¹⁴ Zuckerman, *Atheism and Secularity*, 5.

¹¹⁵ Humanist Association of Ghana, “Creating Freethought Spaces in Our Universities – The University of Ghana Experiment.”

¹¹⁶ Scott Douglas Jacobsen, “An Interview with Kwaku Adusei,” *Humanist Voices*, July 1, 2017, accessed September 24, 2018, <https://medium.com/humanist-voices/an-interview-with-kwaku-adusei-d3f1a9a726dc>.

wellbeing of every member of society and claiming that most of our ills are brought by religious dogma, especially Christian dogma.

The Ghanaian culture may reject the atheism in secular humanism, but it has points of interest with the belief in the human ability and communal spirit as what builds a better society. Though Christianity has done so well in Ghana over the years and has woven itself into the foundations and fabric of the nation, it has been proven that Secular Humanism is receiving some acceptability in Ghana and Ghanaians are not so much opposed to irreligion as may have been believed. The years of work that has been done by persons of irreligion are gathering momentum and gathering up as a threat to Christianity in the nation.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHALLENGE OF SECULAR HUMANISM TO CHRISTIANITY IN GHANA

Secular humanism is a threat and a challenge to Christianity in Ghana. This chapter looks at these challenges and also the factors that could have nourished this philosophy and created space for it in such a highly religious and Christianized nation as Ghana. It would seem that the strength of secular humanism in Ghana is rooted in the weakness of Christianity in the country. It could be said that to some extents, the rise of secular humanism is precipitated or enforced by some fallenness in Christian standards in Ghana.

The first section of the chapter discusses factors that promote secular humanism in Ghana. The second section looks at the actual challenges that secular humanism poses to Christianity and the last section considers the future of Christianity in Ghana as it wrestles with secular humanism.

Factors Promoting Secular Humanism in Ghana

This section looks at the conditions that have helped secular humanism to gain grounds in Ghana. It will discuss religious exploitation, lack of solid biblical teachings and the altogether neglect of touching on the subject of humanism and questions that create doubt in the minds of people in Christian churches.

Religious Exploitation

From a study of the factors that led to the Protestant Reformation to an inquiry into the birth of the Age of Enlightenment and an investigation of the precursors of

the French Revolution, it has been proven that whenever clergy privileges are abused, or there are religious exploitations, society turns against religion. Whenever ministers of the gospel overstep their bounds to claim more than they are due and use religion to undermine and manipulate people, the status of religion in society is endangered.

Over the years, there have been some cases of clerical abuse in Ghana to such extents that it has been regarded as a threat not only to Christianity itself but national development and security. This concern was raised in a statement released by the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) in 2014, in which it expressed worry at what it described as “religious excesses” in the country.¹ The statement condemned “self-styled prophets” in the country some of whom go to the extent of forbidding their members from going to school. The council expressed its readiness to bring its expertise to bear to help curb the worrying trend.

In another statement released in 2018, a former general secretary of the CCG raised the concern of clerical abuse, calling for a national forum to address “religious extremities” and to guard people against “religious exploitation.”² These exploitations are not a new phenomenon, in 1998, William Obeng Darko had to organize a conference for Prophets in Ghana at Kumasi to speak to some of these issues.³

These show the heights to which clerical abuse has risen and its magnanimity to the extent that the concerns are being raised not just from outside Christianity but

¹ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, “Religious Excesses Threat to Development, Security – Christian Council,” *Ghana Web*, last modified October 12, 2014, accessed November 27, 2018, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Religious-excesses-threat-to-development-security-Christian-Council-330036>.

² Alexander Nyarko Yeboah, “Address Religious Extremities in Ghana - Clergy,” *GNA Social*, last modified July 11, 2018, accessed November 29, 2018, <http://www.ghananewsagency.org/social/address-religious-extremities-in-ghana-clergy-135434>.

³ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, “Ghana’s New Prophetism: Antecedents and Some Characteristic Features,” *Journal of Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 15 (2013): 8.

by the biggest and perhaps most influential Christian body in the nation. Religious exploitations take some forms in the country. There are abuses on the rights of individuals, extortions and power drunkenness.

Records indicate how some men and women of God have abused the basic human rights of individuals.⁴ The Administrator at the National Secretariat of the Domestic Violence and Victims' Support Unit (DOVVSU), Lydia Osei Agyeman, speaking at a workshop on Gender-based violence in 2014 indicated that physical and sexual abuse on congregants in some churches and prayer camps were on the increase.⁵ She identified some of these acts as harassment of individuals and inflicting direct pain on them in the name of exorcism and lamented that most of these are shown on television screens.⁶

The Ghana United Nations Association also spoke to human rights abuse by churches when their report in December 2017 cited Churches and the Police as the worst perpetrators of human rights abuses in the country.⁷ The reporter recounted instances where people were made to go naked as pastors walked over them and the mental torture that persons accused of witchcraft were subjected to.

The *Human Rights Watch* in 2012 indicated that at the ever-increasing prayer camps across the country, the fundamental human rights of people are abused. The

⁴ Ashani Michel Dossoumou and Koumagnon A. Djossou Agboadannon, "Fake Prophets and Evangile for Sale in Amma Darko's Not without Flowers," *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature* 6 (2018): 16.

⁵ Jonas Nyabor, "DOVVSU Identifies Religious Abuse A Fast Growing Trend," *News Ghana*, last modified December 10, 2014, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/dovvsu-identifies-religious-abuse-fast-growing-trend/>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Delali A. Awuyeh, "Churches, Police Cited in Human Rights Abuse in Ghana," *Ghananewsonline*, December 29, 2017, accessed November 30, 2018, <http://ghananewsonline.com.gh/churches-police-cited-human-rights-abuse-ghana/>.

emphasis in the report was on the abuses meted out to people who are deemed to have mental challenges.⁸

These reports of human rights abuse perpetrated in the name of Christianity speak to exploitation and raises some outcry against Christianity lending credence to the question as to whether Christianity is that better option to building a safer society. HAG has taken the occasion of one such abuse by Daniel Obinim where he physically assaulted two of his church members publicly for engaging in premarital sex to call people's mind away from men and women of God to science and reason.⁹

There also seem always to be space in the news for pastors who have either raped or defrauded,¹⁰ committed crimes of such magnitudes. Perhaps some of the most worrying crimes in Ghana are perpetrated by people in the name of Christianity. According to Emmanuel Asante, chairman of the Peace Council of Ghana, Christians are responsible for 70% of the problems in Ghana.¹¹ He cites the example of fake pastors and their activities in the nation. Considering these trends in Christianity in Ghana, some have seen it as typical of the accusation by Friedrich Nietzsche against Christianity as a hypocritical system.¹² This case of pastors exploiting people who

⁸ Doris Appiah, "Like a Death Sentence": Abuses against Persons with Mental Disabilities in Ghana," *Human Rights Watch*, last modified October 2, 2012, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/10/02/death-sentence/abuses-against-persons-mental-disabilities-ghana>.

⁹ Humanist Association of Ghana, "HAG Condemns Assault in Church," *Humanist Association of Ghana*, August 18, 2016, accessed December 1, 2018, <http://ghanahumanists.org/hag-condemns-assault-in-church/>.

¹⁰ Malik Sullemana and Eunice Cofie, "Pastor Jailed for Fraud," *Ghanaian Times*, August 4, 2017, accessed November 30, 2018, <http://www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh/pastor-jailed-for-fraud/>.

¹¹ Emmanuel Ayamga, "Christians Responsible for 70% of Ghana's Problems – Peace Council Chair," *Pulse.Com.Gh*, last modified November 15, 2018, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://www.pulse.com.gh/news/local/christians-responsible-for-70-of-ghana-s-problems-id9106830.html>.

¹² Norman Klassen and Jens Zimmermann, *The Passionate Intellect: Incarnational Humanism and the Future of University Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 109.

come to them has become common in West Africa.¹³ These trends have also been addressed in a statement released in January 2014 by the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council. The statement expressed worry that these happenings are denigrating the name of Christianity and the gospel as a whole.¹⁴

The image of Christianity over the years has been changing. The days when Christianity seemed to have the upper hand on morality and honesty seem to be passing as more and more evil is being perpetrated in the name of God. These have made some wary of the religion, and they have begun to question the absolute relevance of the religion.

One other exploitation happening in Christianity and causing it to lose its grips is the accusation that churches have been turned into money-making enterprises.¹⁵ It has been seen that some churches by their operations qualify to be referred to as business entities.¹⁶ It is not uncommon these days to find churches selling oil, water or even blessings.¹⁷

¹³ Chima Agazue, "He Told Me That My Waist and Private Parts Have Been Ravaged by Demons: Sexual Exploitation of Female Church Members by 'Prophets' in Nigeria," *Dignity: A Journal on Sexual Exploitation and Violence* 1 (November 2016): 8–9.

¹⁴ Admin, "It's Time for Regulation of Pastors, Churches - Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council," *MyJoyOnline.Com*, last modified January 31, 2014, accessed November 30, 2018, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2014/january-31st/its-time-for-regulation-of-pastors-churches-ghana-pentecostal-and-charismatic-council.php>.

¹⁵ Victoria Acheampong, "The Effects of Marketing Communication on Church Growth in Ghana" (MPhil Thesis, University of Ghana, 2014), 1.

¹⁶ Adadow Yidana, "From Divine Word to Divine Wealth: Sociological Analysis of the Developmental Phases of Pentecostal Churches in Ghana," *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies* 2 (April 2014): 351.

¹⁷ Kwasi Frimpong, "The IGCG 'sale' of Blessings and the Hypocrisy of the Christian," *Ghana Web*, last modified August 5, 2017, accessed November 30, 2018, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/The-IGCG-sale-of-blessings-and-the-hypocrisy-of-the-Christian-566675>.

Reports of men and women of God who through dubious means extort monies from people abound. President of the Trinity Theological Seminary in Accra, Joseph Obiri Yeboah Mante has expressed concerns about “charlatans” who by false prophecies and miracles dupe people of their monies for their gains.¹⁸ He laments that their actions bring the name of Christianity into disrepute.

Mantey was speaking on how churches in Ghana today are condemned to have left the primary goal of soul winning and discipleship for money making. There are reports of numbers of church leaders who through diverse means of prophecy and revelation extort money from even the poor and the sick in society.¹⁹ The prevalence of these incidents in the ears of some Ghanaians echo the thoughts of Karl Max that religion is the opium of the masses. It looks to some as if Christianity has become that tool by which some men enrich themselves at the expense of others.

It is perhaps against this background that there was such a public outcry and disaffection when at the *Greater Works 2017*, a program held by the International Central Gospel Church led by Mensah Otabil, one of the most respected pastors in the country, specific blessings and fees tagged to them were displayed on the screens. It caused an outburst from within the Christian community itself²⁰ even as it gave others outside the Christian faith occasion to criticize it.²¹

¹⁸ George Larbi, “Christianity Is Becoming Abusive In Ghana - Rev Prof. Mante,” *Peace FM Online*, last modified June 11, 2018, accessed November 28, 2018, <http://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/religion/201806/354359.php>.

¹⁹ Caroline Boateng, “Is the Church a Business Enterprise?,” *Graphic Online*, last modified November 18, 2014, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://www.graphic.com.gh/features/features/is-the-church-a-business-enterprise.html>.

²⁰ Admin, “Otabil’s Pricey, Unbiblical Menu of Miracles,” *Nnyamewaa.Com*, last modified August 2, 2017, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://nnyamewaa.com/2017/08/02/otabils-pricey-unbiblical-menu-of-miracles/>.

²¹ Stanley Seshie, “Pastor Otabil X-Rays Pastors, Christians And Christianity,” *My Ghana Links*, last modified July 28, 2017, accessed November 30, 2018,

People were concerned that they did not expect this of Otabil who is much respected and commands such a broad listenership in the country both among believers and non-believers and that if it has happened, then it points to the fallenness of Christianity in the country. These happenings do not tell well of the Christian faith and do indeed contribute to the disaffection that is generated against the faith.

Clerical abuse also happens with power drunkenness and the extravagant living of some ministers of the gospel.²² The extravagant lifestyle and display of money and wealth by some pastors in Ghana has been a matter of public concern.²³ Some of these attitudes have caused the Ghana Revenue Authority to make plans to investigate supposedly rich pastors.²⁴

Duncan Williams, speaking in Kumasi at the 2011 graduation ceremony of the Action Chapel International Bible College, a college that belongs to his church the Action Chapel, declared that he was so much an expensive pastor that the perfume he uses could not be found in Ghana.²⁵ Some of these pronouncements have caused people to question the modesty that is supposed to come with Christianity.

At the ordination service of the General Council of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, former Moderator, Sam Prempeh spoke against what he called pastors who

<https://www.myghanalinks.com/index.php/%20opinions/9837-pastor-otabil-x-rays-pastors-christians-and-christianity>.

²² David Stiles-Ocran, "Jesus' Kingdom Message and Ghana's New Christianity: A Contextual Approach to The Praxis Of The Kingdom Of God" (MPhil Thesis, University Of Oslo, 2013), 88.

²³ Karen Jenny Lauterbach, "Wealth and Worth: Pastorship and Neo-Pentecostalism in Kumasi," *Ghana Studies* 9 (2006): 102,103.

²⁴ Bernice Bessey, "GRA Probes Flamboyant Pastors," *The Chronicle*, August 10, 2018, accessed November 21, 2018, <http://thechronicle.com.gh/index.php/2018/08/10/gra-probes-flamboyant-pastors/>.

²⁵ Morgan Owusu, "I'm Expensive Pastor-Duncan Williams," *Modern Ghana*, last modified November 1, 2011, accessed November 25, 2018, <https://www.modernghana.com/news/358635/imexpensive-pastor-duncan-williams.html>.

enrich themselves at the expense of their poor church members.²⁶ He mentioned pastors, who lived in plush houses, drove flashy cars and those who are thronged by bodyguards wherever they go to show how standards are fallen in Christianity.

Lastly, religious excesses and abuse are seen in the unhealthy competition among pastors in the country. Mention can be made of the two famous pastors Daniel Obinim and Ebenezer Darkwa Yiadom who traded insults at each other on live radio over who is more powerful than the other and plots each is alleged to have hatched to bring the other down.²⁷

The state of religious excesses and abuse has risen to the level that when called upon to give an address at the opening of the 2018 synod of the Global Evangelical Church in August 2018, the president of Ghana, Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo spoke to them, recounting the powerplay, extravagance, and extortions in Christianity today. The president cited them as inimical to progress and stated that this is not how Christianity used to be²⁸

Surely these battle for supremacy and recognition among some pastors in Ghana and these corruptions, extremities, and abuse are making Christianity unpopular within certain circles and empowering critics of the religion.

²⁶ Donald Ato Dapatem, "Pastors Should Not Enrich Themselves at Expense of Poor," *Graphic Online*, last modified July 16, 2014, accessed November 23, 2018, <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/pastors-should-not-enrich-themselves-at-expense-of-poor.html>.

²⁷ Jonathan E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "Contemporary Prophetism in Kumasi: A Socio-Cultural and Theological Assessment," *Herald Journal Of Education And General Studies (HJEGS)* 2, no. 1 (2013): 66.

²⁸ Edwin Appiah, "Read Akufo-Addo Full Speech on Prosperity Gospel and Taxes," *MyJoyOnline.Com*, last modified August 9, 2018, accessed November 30, 2018, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2018/August-9th/read-akufo-addo-full-speech-on-prosperity-gospel-and-taxes.php>.

Lack of Solid Biblical Teachings

Lack of good biblical teachings and quality discipleship is one other thing that is weakening Christianity in Ghana and giving room for secular thoughts to grow. Some things go into saying that there is poor biblical teaching and training for Christians in Ghana today. We will first look at the inadequate training received by pastors who pastor quite some churches in the country.²⁹ Then we will also look at the general shift from Christianity based on a study of the Bible to one that focuses chiefly on miracles and prosperity.³⁰

In an article published in *Modern Ghana*, Francis Lawer Sackitey worried that the future does not look so promising for Christianity in Ghana and even Africa as a whole. He said this is because Christianity in African is set to produce swindlers who will become the leaders of the church leading people who are themselves ignorant and gullible.³¹ He made this statement against the background that quite a number of the men and women pastoring the ever-growing independent churches in Ghana are people who disregard theological training and critical thinking. There are some who believe that education and theological training stand in the way of the workings of the spirit of God.

With this, we have quite a large number of Christians in the country who are being pastored by men and women who are not trained and who cannot give them sound biblical teachings so that they know what Christianity is indeed about and what

²⁹ Karen Jenny Lauterbach, "Becoming A Pastor: Youth And Social Aspirations In Ghana," *Young: Nordic Journal Of Youth Research* 18 (2010): 264–265.

³⁰ Ntozakhe Cezula, "Reading the Bible in the African Context: Assessing Africa's Love Affair with Prosperity Gospel," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 1, no. 2 (2015): 140.

³¹ Francis Lawer Sackitey, "The State Of Christianity In Africa/Ghana Today," *Modern Ghana*, last modified September 6, 2018, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://www.modernghana.com/news/880467/the-state-of-christianity-in-africaghana-today.html>.

it stands for. These leaders themselves are people who do not have firm grips of the gospel enough to show its true relevance and who cannot defend it against other worldviews much less to teach their congregants to do so. Thus, a significant number of Christians are not being prepared to meet the challenge that humanism poses to Christianity. They do not have answers to some of the thought-provoking questions the humanist asks of the Christian faith. Many Christians in the country have no answers to show how true Christianity is in helping us understand the universe and life, neither do they have answers to how evil and suffering could persist in the face of a loving and powerful God which are the fundamental questions of the humanist.

The inadequate training for quite a number of the clergy who should be the defenders of the Christian faith and their inability to arm their congregations with the truth of Christianity so that they are prepared both to stand in the faith and for the faith prepares the grounds for secular humanism to grow.

As solid biblical teachings that will prepare people to stand as Christians against the tide of humanism is lacking, most congregations are being fed on the falsehood of the prosperity gospel.³² One thing that the prosperity gospel has done is to put a burden of guilt on the poor since it is believed that a person's status as rich or poor is reflective of their spirituality.³³ The other thing is that belief that prosperity is the birthright of the believer is criticized as to have killed the spirit of diligence and hard work in some Christians in Ghana. It is not uncommon to have people close their businesses to spend whole days in a week at church praying for business

³² Eric Z. M. Gbote and Selaelo T. Kgatla, "Prosperity Gospel: A Missiological Assessment," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 70, no. 1 (August 29, 2014): 10.

³³ Efe M. Ehioghae and Joseph A. Olanrewaju, "A Theological Evaluation of the Utopian Image of Prosperity Gospel and the African Dilemma," *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 20 (August 2015): 73–74.

breakthroughs. Some of these attitudes, according to Michael Boadi Nyamekye, the General Overseer of the Maker's House Chapel International, have made Christianity a "lazy fun-fair."³⁴

The kind of teaching that some men of God feed their congregations with has produced Christians who believe that they should live by faith alone, reason having nothing to do with it.³⁵ These false teachings are basically what has contributed to some of the excesses in Christianity as discussed earlier. When the solid and true biblical teachings are inadequate, the foundations to hold down and solidify the progress Christianity has made in Ghana over the years is weakened, and it could come crashing down.

Avoiding the Subject

In as much as secular humanism is gaining grounds in Ghana, it has not been a subject of discussion among Christians. Hardly are there church programs on the scale of miracle and healing crusades addressing humanism and secularism. The neglect of talking about the subject or teachings about it is also giving grounds for it to grow. Reasons for this neglect or silence as we will look at are the facts that the culture takes the existence of God for granted³⁶, the Christian community in Ghana typically does not welcome questions that seem to doubt its truth claims and also the possible lack of competence on the part of church leaders to deal with the subject.

³⁴ Jerry Tsatro Mordy, "Christianity Is Becoming a 'Lazy Fun-Fair' – Dr. Boadi Nyamekye," *MyJoyOnline.Com*, last modified December 14, 2014, accessed December 2, 2018, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2014/December-14th/christianity-is-becoming-a-lazy-fun-fair-dr-nyamekye.php>.

³⁵ Emmanuel Karl, "The Dark Age of Christianity in Ghana," *MyJoyOnline.Com*, last modified May 1, 2018, accessed November 27, 2018, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/opinion/2018/May-1st/the-dark-age-of-christianity-in-ghana.php>.

³⁶ Caleb O. Oladipo, "African Christianity: Its Scope in Global Context," *Review & Expositor* 113, no. 1 (February 1, 2016): 88.

First of all, the Ghanaian culture as discussed earlier is one that takes the existence of God and His rulership over the cosmos for granted. Because these things are a given, churches may not see the need to make time to study the existence of God metaphysically. With the common understanding that God is the source and sustainer of all things, Ghanaian Christianity does not see the need to go into the existence of God and its relevance to our living.

Since the idea of God has been taken for granted and people do not take time to study it, most Christians find themselves empty of any evidence or argument to support their belief in God and His relevance to the life of humanity beyond what they were made to believe either at home or church. Some people have seen the inability of some Christians to give sound reasons for their belief as proof of the claim that Christians are gullible.³⁷ By neglecting to study secular humanism and the answers Christianity has for it, the stage is being set for the faith of young Christians to be challenged.

The second reason flows from the first one above. In most Christian communities, it is almost a taboo for people to question their faith and to ask for grounds for it. To question faith has been equated to denying it and therefore there has not been much tolerance with people who have genuine questions and are seeking genuine answers. Because of this not only are subjects as these not discussed at churches but also people who raise such questions are viewed as apostates or people of little faith. For this reason, there is possibly a good number of young people who nurse doubts in their minds and hearts and have pressing questions but are afraid to voice them out. Some may keep up appearances at church till they cannot handle the

³⁷ J. T. Eberhard, "Christians Are Gullible.," *Patheos*, September 27, 2012, accessed December 3, 2018, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/wwjtd/2012/09/christians-are-gullible/>.

questions anymore and so leave the church or meet other people with similar doubts and find companionship with them.

This situation does not allow people to question their beliefs freely and to find answers to questions that are creating doubt in their minds about the faith has been injurious to the faith as it does not help to get people rooted in the faith. For some people also, it gives the impression that perhaps there is something to hide or that Christianity does not embrace critical thinking and cannot stand up to critical inquiry.

In their personal stories on how they left the Christian faith to join secular humanism, a number of the members of HAG say that as children, Christianity was forced down on them so that they had no options as to which religious status to choose. They say that though they had some doubts of perhaps rather questions concerning the faith they were not given hearing; no one was ready to listen or to go with them down the lane of finding answers to these questions.³⁸ For quite a number of them, this was the primary factor that led them on to leave the church.

When both the church and parents are ready to entertain the questions that young people have, and they believe that the best way to raise young people as Christians are to get them only to believe, they would be setting the stage for them to leave the church. When questions people have on the truth claims of God, religion and the tenets of the Christian faith are not welcome and answered but treated with judgment, these people could be swept away with secularism and humanism.

The third and last reason why most churches have not tackled the subject of secular humanism is the fact that perhaps many Christians in positions of responsibility and trust themselves are not very familiar with the subject or even

³⁸ Humanist Association of Ghana, "Personal Journeys," *Humanist Association of Ghana*, 2015, accessed November 23, 2018, <http://ghanahumanists.org/personal-journeys/>.

aware of its existence. Not very many leaders of the Christian faith in Ghana are very much abreast with current trends and the changing times. Not very many of them are aware of the ideological and philosophical battles that the world is engaged with. Some church leaders in Ghana are not aware of the challenge Christianity has in postmodernism, cosmic and secular humanism. When church leadership is not aware of such dangers, naturally there will not be the urge to deal with them.

Effects of Secular Humanism on Christianity in Ghana

This section discusses the effect that secular humanism has on Christianity in Ghana. It looks at such effects as a challenge to evangelism, nurturing and backsliding.

Secular humanism projects itself as a better alternative to living a more fulfilled life than Christianity. Whereas atheism leaves one with the belief that there is no God, secular humanism goes further to find meaning to life after the *realization* that there is no God. It is, therefore, more substantial, sophisticated and encompassing than plain atheism. Secular humanism has been said to be the greatest threat to Christianity that the world has ever known.³⁹ As secular humanism pushes itself up and presents itself as a more comfortable, fulfilling and progressive alternative to the abuses, extortions, and exploitations in Christianity, it has continually kept people questioning the ability of Christianity to a safe and prosperous society.⁴⁰

³⁹ Bob Klingenberg, *Is God with America?* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2006), 209; David M. Moss and Terry A. Osborn, *Critical Essays on Resistance in Education* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2010), 35.

⁴⁰ Darrel W. Ray, *God Virus, The: How Religion Infects Our Lives and Culture* (Bonner Springs, KS: IPC Press, 2009), 13, 19.

As the years go by, secular humanism has been growing in America,⁴¹ most parts of Europe and some parts of Asia. It is interesting to note that all these places were highly religious just about a century ago. The current state of these lands is proof of how much of a threat secularism is to religion. Upon a study of the turn of events, there have been predictions that the non-religious would become the majority sometimes not so distant in the future.⁴² As secular humanism rises in Ghana, it has effects on the growth of Christianity in the nation on many fronts.

Challenge to Evangelism

One of the significant challenges secularism poses to Christianity is in the area of evangelism. Secular humanism has an appearance of intellectualism. It holds to naturalism; the belief that the physical world is all there is. It teaches that the best way to understand nature and the universe is the scientific method rather than religion⁴³ moreover, by this, it sees all claims to the supernatural as fabrications that are unreasonable (unscientific).⁴⁴ God is seen as a “comforting delusion” at best; a make-belief friend our minds invent so that we can face up with the harsh realities of life,⁴⁵ alternatively, a lazy explanation of the origins of life and the universe.⁴⁶ With this,

⁴¹ Richard Cimino, Christopher Smith, and Martin Marty, *Atheist Awakening: Secular Activism and Community in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–7.

⁴² Gabe Bullard, “The World’s Newest Major Religion: No Religion,” *National Geographic News*, last modified April 22, 2016, accessed November 30, 2018, <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/04/160422-atheism-agnostic-secular-nones-rising-religion/>.

⁴³ Guido O. Perez, *Science vs. Religion: The Search for a Rational Approach* (New York, NY: Algora, 2015), 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁵ Guillen Michael, *Can a Smart Person Believe in God?* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 41.

⁴⁶ Paul R. Myrant, *The Challenge of Evolution: Is There a Creator? What Is He Like, and How Did He Create the Universe?* (Mustang, OK: Tate, 2009), 100–101.

the idea of God becomes just imaginary, and all the claims of Christianity including the Bible become the production of men which fails at any meaningful attempt at either explaining life or telling how it should be lived.

The Bible says in Psalm 11:3 that if the foundations are attacked there is little hope for the righteous. When the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith are brought to question, and doubts about their truthfulness get rooted in the minds of people, it becomes increasingly difficult to reach them with the gospel.

Secularism is posing a challenge to Christianity in Ghana with regards to evangelism. In his address to the Pope at the *ad limina apostolorum*⁴⁷ in September 2014, Joseph Osei-Bonsu, the then president of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference reported to Pope Francis that one of the biggest challenges to the growth of the Catholic Church had been secularism.⁴⁸ Though it cannot be said that it is impossible to reach out to people because they have adopted secular humanism, it is the case that it is difficult to get them mainly because they have imbibed some principles and teachings of secular humanism.

The Ghanaian by default believes in the existence of God. However, intellectual arguments against a belief one adopted as a child and may not have thought through intelligently can go a long way to unsettle their commitment to these beliefs and harden their hearts to embracing the gospel as the truth to live by.

Again, when a person buys into the argument that there cannot be a loving and powerful God considering such calamities as we see around, the conclusion drawn is that there is either no God or that even if there is, he does not deserve to be worshipped. When the mind of a person is led to believe that the world as we have it,

⁴⁷Obligatory visit bishops of diocese pay to the pope to give reports of their diocese.

⁴⁸ Isaac Essel, "We are challenged with materialism, moral decadence.

cannot have a God as the Bible speaks of, then, it becomes more difficult to reach the person with the gospel.

Secular humanist, borrowing from Richard Dawkins, believes that the world as we have it speaks of a world without a creator; a world of “pitiless indifference” where things happen as they would, where some would have plenty where others have few and where some would be healthy where others are sick.⁴⁹ If there is no God, then there is neither Satan nor the need for a savior. If the physical world is all that there is, then there is neither heaven to gain nor a hell to lose and this empties and defeats Christianity.

These views, claiming to be scientific and rationalistic have over history wrestled with Christianity and evangelism. Evangelism suffers where humanist thoughts and philosophies thrive because they challenge the very foundations of Christianity. If secular humanism is allowed to thrive, it will make it very difficult to reach the unchurched.

Challenge to Nurturing

The challenge secular humanism poses to Christianity in evangelism is about how it inhibits its ability to reach out to people outside the church. The challenge posed to nurturing however has to do with challenges to grooming and discipling people in the church to Christian maturity.

Whereas secular humanism may not necessarily take away the religious consciousness of a person at initial contact, it could erode how devoted the person is to the Christian faith. Secular humanism, believing with Protagoras that man is the

⁴⁹ Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life* (London, UK: Orion, 1995), 85.

measure of all things,⁵⁰ puts the humans in charge of their own life; makes humans standards unto themselves and judges in their court. This philosophical position both wrestles against truth as absolute and the need to adhere to some authoritative voice.

As this philosophy infiltrates into the culture, it becomes trying to assert absolute truth and authority and to hold people to standards even in the church. When people are fed on this philosophy, it is difficult to nurture them by Christian standards which are absolute and deontological. We would then have some Christians who believe in the basic tenets of the Christian faith but who are themselves in control of their lives. Christian discipline, discipling, grooming, nurturing and mentoring are made difficult where people have absorbed some principles of secular humanism. People may not leave the faith, but they may live the faith by their standards.

Also, secular humanism poses a challenge to nurturing in that it creates doubt in the minds of people concerning the Christian faith. In as much as people may not leave the faith, the projection of science as the right way of knowing could cast some doubt in their minds regarding certain basic tenets of the Christian faith as creation, the concept of sin and the Trinity.⁵¹ They tend to hold their belief and faith as a culture but in practice may look at things purely from a non-theistic point of view. It becomes challenging to soak such people into the primitive, traditional and evangelical propositions of the Christian faith.

Backsliding

The argument that secular humanism causes Christians to lose their faith cannot be over-emphasized. It is on record that, Kwame Nkrumah, Hope Tawia and

⁵⁰ G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Melbourne, Victoria: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 188.

⁵¹ Perez, *Science vs. Religion*, 10–13.

almost all of the leadership of the Ghana Humanist Association both past and present, were raised Christians.

Kwame Nkrumah as has been discussed earlier, was not only a practicing Christian but went on to study theology. Almost all the people who have shared their stories on the website of the Humanist Association of Ghana claim that they come from Christian homes.⁵² Secular humanism has caused some young people to abandon their faith, and they have now become evangelical humanists who are helping to spread the gospel of secular humanism.

Effect of Secular Humanism on the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Secular Humanism has effects on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana. As a Christian group, the denunciation of the existence of God and His involvement in the affairs of man stands in stark contradiction to its beliefs and practices. Also, the teaching that belief in God is inimical to the good of man kicks against the mission of the church.

The manual of the Seventh-day Adventist Church declares God as the ultimate originator who is sovereign over all nature.⁵³ This belief is challenged by **T1** on the grounds of its belief that God is a lazy explanation of the origins of the universe. The church owns its existence and sustenance to the belief in the existence of God and His involvement in the affairs of man. Indeed the mission of the church is drawn from the

⁵² Humanist Association of Ghana, "Personal Journeys."

⁵³ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual*, 18th ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2010), 30.

understanding that God is the owner of all that there is including every human being.⁵⁴

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church of drawing all men to Christ is also premised on the understanding that God is a good and loving father who seeks and works for the good of all men.⁵⁵ Secular humanism contests this belief with the **T2** argument which challenges the morality of God.

Secular humanism then challenges the fundamentals of the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its beliefs and teachings denounce the church in all it stands for.

Other religions that are not Christian denounce the truth of the Christian message but at least they leave people with a belief in God or the supernatural. This belief in God could be used as bait to win them over to the fuller truth as the Seventh-day Adventist church believes it holds and has been commissioned to preach.

Though other protestant denominations also reject the Sabbath and other distinctive beliefs of the SDA church, their belief in Christ leaves people with loyalty to Jesus and therefore gives room for leading them into the fuller truth as proclaimed by the church. Nominal Adventism does not hold as tenaciously to the truth it has accepted from the Adventist message as it should; though this presents a challenge to true Adventism, it also leaves people with some acknowledgment of the truth that can be built on.

Secular Humanism, however, wipes out the sun, blinds the eye to the light and hardens the heart to the convictions of the Spirit of God. When the very foundations

⁵⁴ General conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-Day Adventists Believe...A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 26, 27.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 36,37.

and basis of the faith is denounced and challenged, any other component of it does not hold.

All of the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the very purpose of its existence are challenged by the fundamental beliefs of secular humanism regarding belief in God. It could be said then that perhaps secular humanism is one of the greatest enemies of the Adventist message and the mission of the church.

Secular Humanism and the Future of Christianity in Ghana

This section elaborates on four points; the supposed lack of intellectual and administrative ability in the church to face secular humanism, the humanitarian activities of humanist organizations in the country, the widespread belief that humanism and secularism create a more prosperous society and the finding that there is a positive correlation between education and religious skepticism. It aims at demonstrating how the future of Christianity in Ghana would look like as it strives with secular humanism.

Secular humanism is a potent force to deal with for Christianity. History has proven that it is such a thing that religion and especially Christianity should be wary of. As religious and Christianized as America has been right from its founding, secular humanism has made much impact on American society, and it is growing. As unimaginable as it may have seemed a few millennia ago, secularity has taken over Europe and relegated Christianity to the status of cultural heritage.

It has been predicted that in the coming years Africa will become the haven of Christianity as secularism drives it away from the lands of the global west.⁵⁶ Considering the growth, Christianity has recorded in Africa as against the decline it

⁵⁶ Patrick O'Neill, "Christianity Advances in Africa," *The Furrow* 23 (September 1972): 545.

has recorded in other parts of the world. It will not be a wild claim to predict that in the coming years Africa might have to send missionaries to Christianize Europe and America again. If Africa becomes that haven of Christianity for the world, then Ghana would have an important role to play. It seems laudable as Christianity has done well in Ghana; integrating itself into the Ghanaian culture and influencing the life of the Ghanaian in almost every way conceivable.

There is the danger though that this hope that people have concerning Christianity in Africa and Ghana may not be realized. Trends, as they stand now, do not seem to support the hope of a golden age of Christianity in Ghana. Secular humanism stands as a challenge to the future of Christianity in Ghana.

The first challenge that Christianity in Ghana will be faced with is the intellectual and even administrative capacity to hold itself together and against the rising tide of secular humanism.⁵⁷ It has been argued that the leadership of the church in Africa has limited access to quality education and also that there is the lack of resources to train these leaders to attain that intellectual capacity to lead the church and to meet up with the challenge.

As the days go by and as secular humanism announces its presence more loudly and roots itself more firmly, Christianity in Ghana would need much intellectual capacity and energy to stem it. It will also need administrative acumen to marshal its resources to brace up with the challenge. It would be seen that the Orthodox churches are doing better at this since they take their ministers through higher education. These ones may have acquired higher education but as to whether that training includes such knowledge as would prepare them to stand secular

⁵⁷ William P. Wahl, "Towards Relevant Theological Education in Africa: Comparing the International Discourse with Contextual Challenges," *Acta Theologica* 33, no. 1 (January 2013): 267.

humanism is another issue. For the majority of the Pentecostal and charismatic churches that hold the majority of Christians however, the level of education of their ministers has not been much.

Again, humanist organizations are getting involved in humanitarian activities in Ghana. Whereas Christian groups did most social interventions and humanitarian services in Ghana groups, quite a number of these services in the country are now provided by humanist associations and organizations. The Humanist Service Corps has for instance been involved with helping victims of human rights abuse and providing better education and healthcare to Ghanaians living in poverty-stricken areas of the country.⁵⁸ There is also the Humanist Aid Foundation Ghana and a host of other humanist foundations and NGOs that are doing some tremendous humanitarian and developmental works in the country.

It should be recalled that one way by which Christianity was accepted in Ghana was through these humanitarian and developmental works that were done by Christian missionaries. As humanist organizations do these humanitarian services in parts of the country, they warm their way into the hearts of people and show themselves as good humans. There is a stark difference that is created between these humanist groups and their activities and Christian leaders who are occupied with power and the display of wealth. These humanitarian activities that are being championed at a time when the name of Christianity is in disrepute and Christians are accused as the major contributors to the ills of the Ghanaian society is a challenge for Christianity, going into the future.

⁵⁸ Kessir Adjaho, "Humanist Service Corp," *Humanist Association of Ghana*, April 6, 2017, accessed December 1, 2018, <http://ghanahumanists.org/humanist-service-corp/>.

The future of Christianity in Ghana is also challenged because secular humanism has positioned itself as a better alternative to building a better society and a more loving people than Christianity. There are statistics out there that suggest that nations that are secular are more developed than nations that are religious.⁵⁹ These statistics are being circulated, and it will catch on with nations such as Ghana that are struggling with developmental issues. With the accusation that Christians are mainly to blame for the ills of the nation, it might not be long till people want to try an alternative that is believed to have worked elsewhere.

There has also been the argument that secular humanism provides an ethical framework that is deeper, more humane and more meaningful than religion.⁶⁰ This argument has as its basis the fact that humanism considers man first while Christianity looks to God first. In other parts of the world, people are beginning to buy into this argument, and if the same happens in Ghana going into the future, it will further endanger Christianity.

Lastly, it has been established in a study that there is a positive correlation between education and religious skepticism. It has been shown that as people receive higher education, they grow more skeptical of religious claims and are more likely to abandon it.⁶¹ Studies have shown that the reason for this, however, cannot be because people come to see Christianity as intellectually empty or impotent as they further

⁵⁹ Damian J. Ruck, R. Alexander Bentley, and Daniel J. Lawson, "Religious Change Preceded Economic Change in the 20th Century," *Science Advances* 4, no. 7 (July 1, 2018): 8680.

⁶⁰ Tom Flynn, "Secular Humanism Defined: Secular Humanism's Unique Selling Proposition," *Free Inquiry*, September 10, 2018, accessed November 30, 2018, <https://secularhumanism.org/what-is-secular-humanism/secular-humanism-defined/>.

⁶¹ Daniel M Hungerman, *The Effect of Education on Religion: Evidence from Compulsory Schooling Laws*, Working Paper (National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2011), 1.

their education.⁶² There are a host of other factors that could instead account for this. The fact remains from the finding though that as people climb higher up the academic ladder, their interest in religion wanes. This finding is relevant looking at the future of secular humanism and Christianity in Ghana. The implication is that as the more significant number of Ghanaians get a higher education, the challenge to Christianity might aggravate. This adds to the point that the rise of secular humanism poses a challenge to Christianity in Ghana going into the future.

Conclusion

Ever Since Christianity Landed in Ghana, it has perhaps never faced a threat to its existence as much as it is now faced with in secular humanism. Some of the wounds that Christianity has sustained are however self-inflicted. Quite a number of the factors that have aided the implantation and growth of secular humanism in Ghana come from weakness within Christianity itself. Religious extremities and exploitations, lack of solid biblical teachings and silence on the subject of secular humanism have created the conditions for it to grow and spread.

As it grows and spread, however, it poses challenges to Christianity in the areas of evangelism, nurturing and the reality that it takes people away from the faith. The future does not look so good either for Christianity since secular humanism seem better poised to make more advances unless the Christian community rises to the challenge.

⁶² Hungerman, *The Effect of Education on Religion*, 1–2.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This closing chapter gives a summary of the thesis relative to the findings made. It then offers recommendations to the issues raised and then concludes the work

Summary

Secular humanism is about the greatest enemy of the Christian faith. It is such a philosophy that attacks the Christian faith at its very core and challenges its most fundamental assumptions and basis. As has been discussed widely in this work, secular humanism looks to the human, natural and scientific to understand the world and to carve a way of life. Secular humanism does not only reject the idea of the supernatural but it condemns it as inimical to progress. It sees in history all the bad things that have been done in the name of religion and tells that human life would be better off without the appeal to any supernatural. Secular humanism also regards the appeal to the supernatural as inadequate to account for natural phenomena. It also questions the reliance on any revelation of any form to determine right and wrong as arbitrary.

Secular humanism also rejects belief in God because it sees that the world as we have it does not tell of a creator as good, loving and powerful as religion especially Christianity claims exists. On moral grounds therefore, it does not accept belief in God. The roots of humanism can be traced to as far back as the 6th Century B.C when people began to find other (in their view better) explanations to life. The

ancients began with a redefinition of the gods but in time, the gods were altogether rejected and repudiated. The foundational principles of human reason and individualism that were found in the literature these ancients left behind sparked the renaissance after the middle ages. The renaissance which was the bedrock of the Protestant Reformation also birthed the Enlightenment which established the scientific method as the preferred epistemology. Secular humanism as we see it in the twenty-first century has come a long way from these humanist philosophies and movements.

It has won some victories in Europe and America although these lands used to be heavily Christian and it is making inroads into several other parts of the world. Traditionally, one would expect that such a movement will find no space in Ghana since it is fundamentally alien to the African cosmology. It is the case however that though the African and, in this case, Ghanaian worldview is not secular, it is communitarian and also celebrates the good of the human. Secular humanism finds reception in these attributes.

It would have been said that as a nation that has been so Christianized as a result of intensive Christian missionary activities over the years, such a philosophy as secular humanism would have had no reception in it. The history as has been found in this work however that is the seed of irreligion has been sown in Ghana and has been fairly watered over the years.

Beginning from Kwame Nkrumah to Hope Tawiah and to the recent Humanist Association of Ghana, secular humanism is alive in Ghana. In recent times the Humanist Association of Ghana which has as its mandate to do away with superstitious beliefs has been involved in activities that are making its presence more pronounced. The association has been involved in humanitarian activities; distributing

books to schools and fighting for the rights of oppressed persons. They are also involved in gender activism and LGBT advocacy. The Humanist Association of Ghana also makes use of the media to educate on their philosophies and worldview. Evidence has been shown in this work that Ghanaians are beginning to open up to irreligion.

As secular humanists organize to build themselves stronger in Ghana it has been discovered that standards within Christianity are falling so that Christianity is losing some grips on the nation. Instances of pastors abusing their office and exploiting people are real. It is also the case that there has been in many regards a shift from teaching the core messages of the Christian gospel which would immune members to opposing philosophies to a focus on signs, miracles, and the prosperity gospel. A number of Christians in the country are therefore not grounded in their faith enough not to be moved. Again, Churches have not provided the platform to deal with the questions secular humanism poses to the Christian faith. Because of this, there are individuals who are made to conclude that the claims of secular humanism are true. The church seems to have turned a blind eye to the inroads secular humanism is making and the potency of the challenge it presents to Christianity.

The work has identified some of the challenges secular humanism poses to Christianity to include a challenge to evangelism, a challenge to nurturing and backsliding. Secular humanism presents a challenge to evangelism from its rationalistic, scientific and intellectual outlook by which it is able to win the minds of the educated and to close it up to the basic tenets of the Christian faith. It presents a challenge to nurturing and discipling by teaching individualism and private judgment. Some Christians are not won into secular humanism but they imbibe these philosophies and by that, they are not open up to be instructed and guided. The last

challenge mentioned in this work is backsliding. It goes without saying that secular humanism and religion are mutually exclusive therefore Christians who buy into it leave their faith. This work has presented evidence of people who have left Christianity for secular humanism.

Again, it has been found in this work that secular humanism going into the future, may pose an even greater challenge to Christianity. It has been seen that Christianity in Ghana may not quite be preparing itself with the intellectual and even administrative ability to stem the tide of secular humanism. It has also been seen that humanist associations are now more involved in the humanitarian activities that Christianity sometime in the past use to champion and by this it is winning the hearts. It has also been found that with the accusations that secular humanism is a better alternative to building a more prosperous society and the exploitations we find in Christianity, it is well on its way to winning the confidence of people even if the progress would be slow.

Lastly, in this work, it has been discussed how it has been proven that as people get schooled, they get more inclined to secular humanism than to religion. Therefore, as more and more Ghanaians get schooled, the challenge to Christianity may grow stronger.

Conclusion

To conclude, we live in a global village and the African today is more sophisticated than it was in years gone by. Cultural assimilation has eroded to some extents the traditional worldview that the African would hold. Belief in God cannot be taken for granted any longer because other worldviews present themselves forcefully to the African.

If Christianity in Ghana will come out of this century alive and vibrant, it cannot do so riding on the backs of the intensive missionary efforts made in years gone by. It would have to rise to the peculiar challenges that it is faced with today; it would have to rise to secular humanism. The activities, particularly of the Humanist Association of Ghana, the Common-Sense foundation and other secular humanist groups, are going to intensify by the day and Christianity will continue to enjoy its large following only as it sits up to the challenge.

Recommendations

From the findings in this work, I would like to make some few recommendations to the Christian community regarding some ways that it could better brace itself up to the challenges that secular humanism presents to it.

It seems obvious that the Christian community in Ghana has not been so much awakened to the activities of secular humanism in the nation. It will be necessary for Christians in the country to awaken to the reality of the challenge and accept that it is indeed a challenge. Perhaps because of the visible vibrancy of Christianity even on university campuses, the mind of the Christian community has not been averted to the other numbers who are losing or have lost their faith on the quiet.

Christianity in Ghana would also have to prove itself ethical and responsible. The abusers of the religion and especially church leaders who abuse their offices would have to be brought to book. There should be clear actions that would indicate the stand on the Christian church on such things as clerical abuse. The CCG and some other bodies have tried to do something but their efforts have to be intensified. The trust of people in the good of Christianity would have to be revived would also a recommendation that church leaders and especially those who shepherd the younger generations should be prepared both in ability and will to teach the Christian faith to

their congregations; its coherence, consistency, historicity and the validity of its truth claims. This will go a long way to firm their belief.

The church should also be a place that is welcoming of questions people have concerning the Christian faith. The atmosphere should be created such that people who have questions concerning faith can comfortably ask them and seek answers. The more comfortable people are to ask questions and the more readily they are engaged reduces the chances of doubt developing in their minds.

Lastly, I would suggest the use of the media to speak to the general questions people harbor on Christianity and the specific questions that secular humanists pose to the faith. It will not be enough to teach in the various churches. A number of people who are not regular at church are being reached with humanist philosophies through the traditional and social media and Christians would need to use these media to reach them. This is not necessarily a call for open debate but a call to the fact that for some people who may be losing their faith the best place to reach them is through the media.

This work in every sense does not exhaust the research that needs to be done in this area. This work has tried to look at secular humanism and how it touches on Christianity in Ghana as a whole, researchers who wish to go into this area could zoom in on specific Christian denominations to be more vivid. Also, future researchers could look historically, into how Christianity has affected the socio-economic growth of Ghana. Lastly, researchers in the future can look at how secularization may have changed the face of Christianity in Ghana over time.

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