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Globalization and Religion: Analysing the Impact

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ABSTRACT

Globalization is the interconnectedness of people and ideas across the globe. It involves the scaling of borders and the creation of a global society where events in far-flung areas reverberate uninhibited across great distances and geographical locations. Its agents are the information and communication technology (ICT), and the revolution in the modern transportation system. Globalization has affected everything and everybody and changed the traditional ways of doing things such that no region of the world can again boast of impermeability. Accompanying it are the values now known as modernism which includes a preference for change rather than continuity, freedom rather than restriction. This has led to the development of a secular culture which religious enthusiasts view as crude, sacrilegious, unacceptable and socially dangerous, and as threatening the very existence of traditional religious values. This paper attempts an analysis of the interplay between religion and globalization. It uses the cause-effects theory, which discusses the impact of social systems as a result of their causes. The paper concludes that globalization as a socio-economic system should have nothing to do with religion which is solely concerned with the moulding of morality for the spiritual upliftment of man, his peace, and fulfilment in life.

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INTRODUCTION

We live in an era in which the tempo of globalization and social change has thrown the world into doubt and perplexity. The certainties, beliefs and practices of previous ages have been called into question by a combination of scientific advancement and rational ideologies. The traditional moral order has been toppled by the globalization of the world economy and the revolution in transportation and mass communication. There has been a shift all over the world from religion to secularism, which in the present global society has become something of a preferred religion. The entire world now reeks in the odium of the secular Western values and attitudes to life. The non-religious views of modern life have opened the floodgates of materialism and sensuality, making the time-honoured religious beliefs sound gibberish. The *Homo religiosus* (Latin for 'religious man') is now maligned and marginalized. He is thought of and dismissed as old-fashioned and anti-social when he kicks against promiscuity, divorce, adultery, prostitution, pornography, abortion, homosexuality, lesbianism, and other similar anti-religious deviations. These vices which in previous ages attracted almost universal condemnation have been elevated to worldwide adulation by the process and promoters of modern globalization who see no wrong in the destabilization of the moral fabrics of society to promote their wares and foibles. This paper argues that globalization has destroyed the moral basis of society by its attacks on traditional religious values and the promotion of unbridled consumerism.

Meaning, Evolution and the Practice of Globalization

Globalization can be defined as "the process by which events, decisions, and activities in one part of the world can come to have significant consequences to individuals and communities in quite distant parts of the globe" (McGrew et al., as

cited in Calver and Calver, 2007). Giddens describes it as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant locations in such a manner that local happenings are shaped by events happening many miles away and vice versa (1990). He further portrays it as the key characteristic of the modern economic system and of modernity itself. Globalization is the handmaiden of Western modernism and the Western control of the global economy. According to Thomas Friedman, the evolution of globalization spanned through three historical stages (Friedman, 2005). The first stage was the period of mercantilism and colonization, which stretched from 1492 to 1800 and "shrank the world from a size large to a size medium." According to him, the driving power of that stage of globalization was the muscle power, horse-power, and wind power, or, later, steam power that countries had and how creatively they deployed them.

The second stage of globalization, he continued, ran from 1800 to the end of the Second World War. This was the age of Pax Britannica and it "shrank the world from a size medium to a size small." The driving force of this stage was the rise of multinational companies, global markets, and new institutions. It was a time that saw a dramatic drop in transportation and communication costs which was exploited by global consortiums to create a "web of global products, capital and labour" (Nau, 2009). The last stage of the evolution of globalization began in the last half of the twentieth century. This is the period of Pax Americana and "is shrinking the world from a size small to a size tiny and flattening the playing field at the same time." The driving force of this last and present stage of globalization is the internet. Friedman rightly identifies "technological change as the rocket booster behind all three versions of globalization," but he enters a more contentious arena when he views "the impact of technological change as levelling or flattening the playing field for all individuals and all civilizations, regardless of ideological differences." This is because

globalization is anything but a level playing field, especially for the developing countries. The nations and individuals who control globalization are doing everything to retain it within their orbits.

This is hardly surprising as the prime force propelling the evolution and development of globalization is capitalism driven by greed. It was the desire of the players in each stage of globalization to have a firmer control of other lands and peoples for the purposes of power and economic gain that pushed them to seek and to devise the means to reach those ends. If they were content with what they had and where they were, globalization, as it is now, would have been unnecessary. Thus, contrary to the views of Friedman and other liberal thinkers, globalization is not fostering a level playing field for all but rather perpetuating the dominant position of its creators over the rest. As written by Kwame Anthony Appiah:

There is a world system of capitalism. It has a centre and a periphery. At the centre - in Europe and the United States- is a set of multinational corporations. Some of these are in the media business. The products they sell around the world promote the creation of desires that can be fulfilled only by the purchase and use of their products. They do this explicitly through advertising, but more insidiously, they also do so through the messages implicit in movies and in television drama... it is the imagery and cultural perspectives of the ruling sector in the centre that shape and structure consciousness throughout the system at large (Appiah, as cited in Nau, 2009).

Through this method, the West transmits its lifestyle around the world and makes many to strive to attain such level of life and possibly pull their families along. The United States of America, for example, has created the desire for people around the world to aim to live like the Hollywood stars they watch on television and cinema (Calvert and Calvert, 2007). They seek to buy their type of clothes, caps, cars, furniture and to imitate their general lifestyle. This has serious implication for religion. It breeds unbridled consumerism which is antithetical to the standards of religion, especially

as the values promoted come with a serious secular undertone. Globalization has eroded religious values in the world by its entrenchment of materialism and sensualism.

Religion and the Human Society

Religion is a central component of human society. Its centrality is evidenced by its presence in every culture of the world. The significance of religion is such that together with the use of language and the systematic making of tools, it is an ultimate feature distinguishing man from other living creatures (Grolier Society, 1954). The importance of religion to human life is such that even in areas where it has been actively suppressed or outlawed like the former Soviet Union, there had developed similarities described as para-religion or quasi-religion (Grolier Society, 1954). Scholars have not agreed on a universally accepted definition of religion, but a key inkling to its understanding is “the supernatural” (Isiramen, 2010). Religion is principally concerned with the unseen realm where reason and sense perceptions do not suffice. Every culture has envisaged an otherworldly sphere of this sort in which one perceives the extraordinary and mysterious. Earlier European travellers and missionaries had misconstrued non-Western societies as having no religions because of the absence of sacred scriptures and churches in their societies. However, this has been found to be inaccurate. There have never existed a people without some notion of a supernatural force superintending their universe. In all cultures, man has believed in the existence of a transcendent or immanent being that holds the key to the mysteries of life. Some societies may have sought contact with that supernatural being through the worship of mountain spirits, trees, rivers, the sky, or the forces believed to control their agriculture and their health but, no human society has ever existed without a modicum of religious feelings and thought. Friday Imaekhai submits that,

The fundamental point about religion is that it has to do with how an individual perceives his/her existence and how that existence relates to the supernatural powers that he/she believes he/she needs to relate to in order to live meaningfully. In this regard religion is more complex than we think and the human mind is

very much intertwined with religious affairs than we can humanly imagine. That is why such efforts as Communism, Marxism, and Maoism, which tried to create a “non-religious” state and society were not quite successful (Imaekhai, 2010).

Communist thoughts viewed religion as the creation of man. Its principal theorist Karl Marx played down religion when he said:

Man makes religion: religion does not make man.... The religious world is but the reflex of the real world... Religion is but the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people... (Fisher 2008).

That set the stage for the promotion of atheism and the oppression of the religious in communist lands up to the era of the Cold War. However, Communism failed in the former Soviet Union and other areas where it held sway to stamp out religion from the hearts of men and society. Many continued to practice their religions not minding the consequences while others sought to fill the religious void by the creation of quasi-religious lookalikes.

Religion views the entire universe as a created order. It conceives of human life as proceeding from a Creator who is both interested in the man he created and in his affairs in the world. To this end, the Creator made rules and commandments that must be obeyed to maintain the right relationship with him and to maximize the gains that are derivable from his creation. Some of these rules are written in sacred texts, and some survive as parts of cultures and traditions. Some religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Islam are monotheisms which believe in the worship of one God, while the rest of the world religions are either polytheistic or pantheistic beliefs with the view that the supernatural could be accessed through a multiplicity of means, gods and goddesses.

The purpose of a religious description of the divine origin of life is not only to provide an explanation for how the world began but also to provide the moral blueprint for living in the present world. Religious people aspire to live by the ethos and principles of their religions which are mostly

expressed in terms of moral behaviour. The essence of this is to maintain the right relationship with the Creator and as well as enhance individual life through such a relationship. Service to the Creator or the intermediary gods and goddesses consists of devotedly adhering to their revealed principles and standards for spiritual life and general conduct. The religious instinct in man is a basic ingredient of his makeup and this explains the universal appeal of religion to mankind across all ages and cultures. The reason for this has been advanced by many scholars and religious men. From a religious point of view, this instinct is borne out of the fact that man proceeds from God and cannot find rest until he reconnects with him. The overwhelming material world which leaves man wondering how it came about, his own origin, purpose and end fill man with an inquiring mind concerning these mysteries.

According to Jiddu Krishnamurti:

It appears that throughout the world, man has always been seeking something beyond his own death, beyond his own problems, something that will be enduring, true and timeless. He has called it God, he has given it many names, and most of us believe in something of that kind... (Fisher, 2008).

The Numidian Christian theologian Saint Augustine expressed similar restlessness when he stated about God that: “Thou hast created us for Thyself, and our heart is not quiet until it rests in Thee” (Hesburgh, 2008). Radhakrishnan observed that “every attempt at solving the problem of the ultimate basis of existence from a religious point of view has come to admit an Absolute or God” (Radhakrishnan, 1993). He also added that “rationalistic logic and mystic contemplation favour, as a rule, the former conception, while ethical theism is disposed to the latter” (Radhakrishnan, 1993). Therefore, man takes to religion as a way of solving the most basic problem of humankind which is that of the meaning of life and the ultimate basis of existence. The solution to this quest holds the key to a feeling of fulfilment, happiness and peace with oneself and society. It also holds the key to moral living. Without it, existence in life loses meaning, and a meaningless life engenders strife. The religious conception of

life also hands down the idea of accountability to the Supreme Deity of one's conduct on earth. This consideration of the afterlife tends to help in the building of individual moral lifestyle, which is important in making society more peaceful, orderly and safe. Without that fear, man's liberty is limitless and could stretch to dangerous extremes. The lawlessness of the present age, the lewdness, the violence, and the insecurity are all knock-on effects of the de-emphasis of religion in modern society. The reason is that what one believes about God shapes his thoughts and values; actions and inactions.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGION IN THE WORLD

Most of the religions practised across the world today are not indigenous to areas where they are found. By the process of human inter-group relations which have been greatly aided by globalization, most religions have found their ways to foreign lands and regions (Held et al., 1999). Islam which originated in Saudi Arabia is now pervasive in North Africa and in much of Southwest, Southeast, and South Asia. Christianity which is the dominant religion of Europe has its roots in Israel. Three variants of it are practised—Protestantism in northern Europe, Roman Catholicism in the south and the Orthodox Christian faith in Russia and other eastern European areas. North and South America are overwhelmingly Christian with Roman Catholicism commanding more followership in the south. Australia has large Christian populations occasioned by British settlers in the area since the 18th century. Sub-Saharan Africa is now substantially Christian and Moslem with the African Traditional Religion trailing behind. India is a hybrid of Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism with minority but active Christian population since colonial times.

Buddhism, with its origin in India is now a primary religion in East Asia and in several parts of Central and Southeast Asia. Judaism which is the religion of the Hebrew people is principally centred in Israel, but large European cities and the United States equally hold substantial amounts of Jewish followers of the faith. There is increasing

mongrelisation of the modern world. In some areas the religion in practice is a syncretism of ancient religious traditions with foreign ones. This is the wide religious situation throughout Central and Southern America, where indigenous religious practices continue to thrive in the face of the European-introduced Roman Catholicism. (Encyclopedia.com, 2019). In many communities there, earth and water deities are venerated together with images of the Virgin Mary, with many of their festivals a mix of traditional beliefs and Catholicism. This is also true of some indigenous peoples of North America who have clung to their traditional belief systems. Similarly, descendants of African slaves in the Americas still hold on to certain of their traditional beliefs sometimes mixed with Catholicism to form new religious traditions. This is exemplified by the Afro-Caribbean religion, Santeria which is a result of the admixture of Yoruba traditional beliefs and Roman Catholicism. Another of such is Vodun which is a polytheism rooted in Benin cultures and Roman Catholicism and practised in Haiti, Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad and in the southern United States (Encyclopedia.com, 1999). Most religions are multicultural, laced with ideas and traditions that are particular to other cultures or regions, while many countries are home to followers of multiple religions. Countries like this include the United States, Australia, and Brazil which have diverse and enormous populations of immigrants; others are those situated across ancient cultural crossroads such as Egypt, India, Israel, and Turkey. All these are the creations of human interactions facilitated by the globalization of all ages, especially the contemporary type.

Instruments of globalization have been exploited by religious organizations to advance their frontiers. Such instruments like the internet, television, cable, radio, etc., have aided the spread of religions across the world. However, the dominant impact of globalization on religion is the erosion of religious meanings and values. Globalization treats religion as an ideology and a means of social relations instead of a way to reach or please God (Igboin, 2010; Marty, 1996). This has led to the erosion of the importance of religion as well as the ebbing of the seriousness with which religion had been held in the past.

ROOTS TO GLOBAL NEGLECT OF RELIGION: THE AGE OF REASON

The root to secularism and the glorification of non-religious values in the modern world lay in the Enlightenment movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which was triggered by the breakthroughs in scientific knowledge and industrial technology. The period of that movement is otherwise known as the Age of Reason. The prime goal of the Enlightenment intellectuals was the elevation of human reason over faith as the principal guide to all human conducts. The Age of Reason started with the assumption that the mind of man was an all-sufficient, autonomous agent for comprehensively understanding human nature and reality. It asserted that human intelligence could appropriately comprehend man and the world (Brooke, 1989). The movement attacked the church and religious faith as the prime power that had caged human mind and progress in the past and gave glory to scientific innovations and human reasoning as the way out for human and societal advancements. The Enlightenment writers and philosophers, elated at the industrialization and commercialization of society saw the hope of human progress and global perfection in scientific and technological advancement and as such placed great premium on the discovery of truth through the observation of nature rather than through the study of the Bible or other religious texts. Before this time, men looked to religion as the great guide of life. But the improvement in human material wellbeing through industrialization and commerce imbued the Enlightenment scholars with new confidence in the ability of man to advance his society without any extra-terrestrial help. They saw humanity as possessing sufficient faculty to untie the knots and live a more rewarding life.

Immanuel Kant, the German promoter of Enlightenment, wrote in 1784: "Have the courage to use your reason – that is the motto of the Enlightenment" (Encarta, 2008). Thus, to the Enlightenment thinkers, anything that could not be proven by critical reasoning is not worthy of human respect and should be discarded. Therefore, religious faith or superstition should never be allowed to hold humanity spellbound. They disregarded the notion of the innate corruptibility of humanity as taught by the church but rather saw

pleasure and happiness as reasonable pursuits that could be realized in this world rather than in a blissful state of otherworldly or spiritual salvation. They criticized the idea that the natural universe was governed by the miraculous act of a supernatural God but instead elevated rational scientific laws which allowed for experiments and observations, as the key to understanding the universe. They caricatured the idea of life after death as idle aspirations that should be set aside to focus energy on the means to improve man's life. They placed worldly happiness over and above man's salvation by religion.

The reasoning of the Age of Reason can be encapsulated in the following words of one of its spokesmen, Baron von Holbach:

Let us endeavour to dispense those clouds of ignorance, those mists of darkness, which impede Man on his journey... which prevent his marching through life with a firm and steady step. Let us try to inspire him...with respect for his own reason-with an inextinguishable love of truth...so that he may learn to know himself...and no longer be duped by an imagination that has been led astray by authority...so that he may learn to base his morals on his own nature, on his own wants, on the real advantage of society... so that he may learn to pursue his true happiness, by promoting that of others...in short, so that he may become a virtuous and rational being, who cannot fail to become happy (Shelley, 2008).

They argued especially for the removal of religion from public life and public authority, maintaining that "public matters in a commercial society concerned markets and property, not the saving of souls" (Encarta, 2008). Voltaire extolled the London Royal Exchange as an example of the spirit of the Age of Reason, describing it as the place where "the Jew, the Mohammedan, and the Christian transact together as though they all professed the same religion, and give the name of infidel to none but bankrupts," (Encarta, 2008). Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, and a principal supporter of the Enlightenment, echoed the same anti-religious sentiment when he enthused:

The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg (Encarta, 2008).

In other words, commerce, industry and happiness become the preferred religion in this modern age instead of spending one's time in the search for God or haggling over the supernatural. They also rejected the idea of looking to the past to improve the human situation proposing that faith in progress required that the past be viewed critically. Voltaire wrote that history is "little else than a long succession of useless cruelties" and "a collection of crimes, follies, and misfortunes" while for President Thomas Jefferson, "To recur to the annals of our ancestors for what is most perfect in government, in religion, in learning, is worthy of those bigots in religion, and government, by whom it is recommended, and whose purpose it would answer. But it is not an idea which this country will endure" (Encarta, 2008). Thus, was laid the root of secularization which the United States as the foremost promoter of free-thinking and modern globalization would later spread and entrench around the world.

The era of the Enlightenment can be said to have ended, but the spirit of that age continues till today and is, in fact, the defining ideology of the present global society.

...the Enlightenment left a lasting heritage for the 19th and 20th centuries. It marked a key stage in the decline of the church and the growth of modern secularism. It served as the model for political and economic liberalism and for humanitarian reform throughout the 19th-century... It was the watershed for the pervasive belief in the possibility and the necessity of progress that survived...into the 20th century (Encarta, 2008).

Scholars like Charles Darwin, Ludwig Feuerbach, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche, in sync with the Enlightenment, advanced scientific, philosophical, psychological and sociological arguments along this line. Sigmund Freud viewed religion as a "collective fantasy", or a "universal obsessional neurosis" (Fisher, 2008). Ludwig Feuerbach saw God as

"nothing more than the projection of man's imagination." Karl Marx saw religion as "the opium of the people", and Friedrich Nietzsche declared that "God is dead", while Charles Darwin concluded that the world was not created by God but evolved (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1990).

In relation to the foregoing and in furtherance of it is the notion set forth by Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist, in his 1912 work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, that societies create the values they worship. According to this view, religion is not a representation of any supernatural Being or beings but rather a creation of the values particular societies hold dear; religious worship is not human veneration of a supernatural being(s) but rather societies' adulation of their esteemed values. According to him, society creates its own gods, saviours, scriptures, or sacraments based on the values they cherish. It is the authority and beliefs of a society that elevate that society's collective aspirations or dreams to symbols of religious devotion. Religion is ipso facto to be taken neither as the product of supernatural revelation nor as a fantasy but rather as the power of a society to make certain values sacred and others profane in the lives of members of that society. In Western societies, those sacred values are represented in the pursuit of happiness, individual rights, liberty, justice, equality, commerce, etc. that must be preserved from the violation. The implication of this standpoint is that there is no God to look up to or think about but rather the society and what it cherishes or adores.

These ideas quickly took the stage as the new gospel truth, embraced and cherished, especially as the churches could not adequately defend themselves in the face of these assaults. Many churchmen buckled under the secular offensive and left the society helpless in the face of the anti-religious thinkers. Thus, even while Darwin was still alive, "most thoughtful and articulate clergy had worked their way to the conclusion that evolution was wholly compatible with an enlightened understanding of the scriptures" (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1990). This view flung the door open for millions to walk out of the church and to close the lid on the search for God. Globalization then took it up to both intensify

the message of religious meaninglessness and to promote materialism as the new religion. Using the internet, television, radio, cable as a vehicle, globalization took up the inundation of the world with the message of a world of endless material possibilities, the satisfaction of which is made to look like man's only reason for living. With the power of modern advertising techniques, motion pictures and other forms of entertainment, globalization has whetted the taste of the modern man with the parade of ever-burgeoning exotic goods. At no other time in human history has there ever been such worldwide adulation of materialism as in the world of the twentieth century and on.

Globalization has continued in the intensification of the secular ideologies that began with the Enlightenment and in the exaltation and promotion of global consumerism. As the agent and offshoot of the scientific and technological innovations that have birthed the set of standards and the new thinking that have formed the bases and creed of modernism, globalization has continued to serve the industrial creations and products that should now be pursued instead of religion. The major reason why religion is being killed and secularism promoted is to make way for the western industries to thrive uninterrupted by any religious considerations. Modernism employs the instrumentalities of globalization to force the world in its direction and to make its secular creed the only creed; its use is to amplify and intensify the message of human reasoning whose mission is to remove the supernatural out of human consciousness and focus on what the eye can see and science can prove. These have formed the articles of faith of the Western mind and with their control of the instruments of globalization have promoted and elevated the same as the dominant "religion" of the present westernized global society.

All these have brought a shift in the attitudes of religious worshippers and leaders across the world. Religious leaders have reacted to modern inroads and attacks on religion in several ways. Some have reacted violently and others more conciliatory and yet others have moved to re-emphasize what their religions stand for.

Religion in an Age of Globalization

There is religious fatigue in the world today as a result of the impact of globalization. It is not the best of times for those who point men to God. The globalization of secularism and consumerism has resulted in a mass exodus out of the churches and other worship centres around the world. The "None" category is now the fastest growing in surveys that enquire of peoples' religious affiliations and only one out of three persons say they are interested in religious topics (Awake, 2010; The Local, 2018). Although there are isolated cases of bursting Christian congregations in the Americas, Africa and Eastern Europe, the dominant religious atmosphere in the present times is that of widespread apathy, dwindling congregations and the shutting down of churches. In Britain, only about two per cent of the population attends Sunday services, and thus it has been projected that the churches may be extinct in that country by 2040. Speaking in the same vein, Steve Bruce, in his book, *God is Dead- Secularization in the West* noted that contrary to the nineteenth century when almost all British weddings were religious, it was only 60 per cent in 1971 and 31 per cent in 2000 (Bruce, 2002).

The London Telegraph also observed that "All the main denominations from the Church of England and the Roman Catholics to the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, are suffering from long-term decline." According to John Bingham, the Religious Affairs Editor, only a third of the populations attending services in the Church of England in the early 1960s do so now (Bingham, 2016). This is the spirit of globalization in action. With the destruction of the basis of religion and the substitutive intensification of materialism, glamour, entertainment, and pleasure, the congregations previously seen in the churches and places of religious worship now find their ways to the casinos, night clubs, and brothels where they seek satisfaction for a whetted taste. The modern man, especially the youth, now view religion as dull and a killjoy- do not touch, do not do; do this, do that. In the face of the new gospel of secularism and materialism, there seems to be nothing more to gain in the continuous regard of the restraining messages of religion.

The same trend in Britain has also been reported about the Netherlands where, according to the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office, “it is expected that by 2020, 72 per cent of the population will not have any religious affiliations at all” (Awake, 2010). In Germany, it has also been observed that people are turning to the occult and witchcraft in their numbers to search for the comfort they once found in churches, jobs and family, and thus forcing churches across the land to close up for lack of congregations. Increase in material prosperity, as well as educational opportunities, have been identified as some of the causes of this religion lethargy (The Local, 2018).

In the face of this dwindling fortune, many churches are changing with the changing times. Many have modified their styles of worship. Some now proclaim themselves as non-judgmental churches and selling the impression that God accepts or tolerates any kind of conduct. A Nigerian born liberal church leader once remarked that it was not a sin against God for church members to engage in masturbation (Ebhomele, 2012). This viewpoint was not based on any authoritative religious text or tradition but as a way to pander to the whims and tastes of some of his followers. The churches and other religious societies have largely lost their relevancies as places for the worship of God, emphasizing the mundane and material rather than the spiritual.

Instead of the Word of God is emphasized as in the old times, choreography, musical entertainments, excitements and other secular measures are increasingly being adopted by most churches as a way to retain or attract membership. Some churches undertake studies in business techniques to enable them to improve the marketing of their religious services. Huge financial outlays are made to hire church consultancy firms. Many churches incorporate beauty salons, sports facilities, saunas, cafes, and restaurants in their church complexes. Other attractions include theatre and visiting celebrities, such as music stars, comedians, actors and actresses (Awake, 2010). Many pastors themselves imitate rock and reggae stars in the delivery of their messages to their congregations. Some wear dreadlocks and perm their hairs. In Africa and other non-Western areas, many religious leaders strive to sound and look as western or

modern as possible in accents, outfits and mannerisms, all in a bid to make their churches and services appeal to the glamorous taste of the modern times and to be as entertaining as possible to an entertainment-savvy generation. Frederick Catherwood observes that,

As the real power of the church declines... All the techniques of modern communication are called in aid... Radio, magazines, advertising, tapes and loudspeaker vans are all tried. But still, the churches influence declines. Then changes of style are introduced. Beat groups are brought into cathedrals and the church identifies with the modern trends. Still, the numbers go down. Then it is decided that it is the church buildings which put people off and that it is necessary to return to the house church. But that does not seem to turn the tide either (Catherwood,1965).

There is a sheer loss of confidence in “the old-time religion”. It has failed to sustain the interest of the modern westernized mind. Interest in the supernatural is gone, and God is replaced with the worship of mammon and outright materialism. Religious worship is now made as materially as attractive as possible. Because of the search for entertainment and material satisfaction, religious loyalties have also seriously gone down. Churches have no permanent membership anymore. People very easily switch religions and thus heating up the religious market. “We are seeing the super-marketing of religion. People consume, and when they don’t find an institution they agree with, then they go somewhere else,” says the director of the National Vocation Service of the French Catholic Church (Awake, 2010). Professor Grace Davie added, “Individuals simply ‘pick and mix’ from the diversity on offer. Religion, like so many other things has entered the world of options, lifestyles and preferences” (Awake, 2010). People now tailor their religions to fit their lifestyles.

The global craze for getting ahead in a materialistic and competitive world has put the churches in a dire strait where they have to concede to a gluttonous world in order to remain afloat or go extinct. Religiosity is being exchanged for consumerism and the quest for economic Eldorado. In the third world countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America,

the majority of those found in the churches go there to search for miracles for material breakthroughs. Likewise, a good number of those who open churches or join the priesthood do so to shore their selves up economically. Others change their religions to search for greener pastures in other religious traditions. This is why many so-called believers have become thieves, swindlers and manipulators who do not preach or endure sound doctrine. Gone are the days when men of religion were trustworthy. There seems to be nothing more to look forward to across the world except the struggle for material satisfaction. Consequently, the prosperity gospel has become ingrained and fashionable in religious circles with most churches tending to be more therapeutic and less judgmental. Most preachers now tailor their messages to tips for success in life.

In all these, the ultimate gainers are the industrialized economies of the world. Secularization serves the purpose of western industrial and commercial domination because it paves the way for the marketing of all their industrial products, including condoms, pornographies, aphrodisiacs, sex toys, etc. These are made to look like the very essence of life and the youths especially, go crazy in their quest to meet up with the glamour on display. The internet and other media outlets are awash with the promotion and advertisements of all these things which are destructive to both religion and society. The Christian or religious teachings forbidding infidelity in marriage, adultery, fornication, lust, homosexuality, lesbianism, and incest, have been relegated to the background and made to look like some Stone Age relics. Unable to contain themselves, most members of churches and other religions patronize pornographic sites on their smartphones and laptops. Many also are clients of the producers of objects and creams that boost sex organs such as breasts, hips, and penis (Amobi, 2010). The global entertainment industry is most culpable in this regard with their promotion of nudity, prostitution, and all kinds of obscenities on the media channels. Songs and videos today, including religious ones are becoming increasingly voluptuous. There is hardly any music or video on display without erotic scenes or lyrics, and their labels covered with images of naked or skimpily

dressed women. There is now a global emphasis on sex appeal. The world has become an open brothel.

All these give birth to the social vices that have become today's societal headaches. Many take to robbery, cultism, drug peddling, internet and other sundry frauds, prostitution, and the like, just to measure up. Indeed, greed and lust have become the creed of the westernized global society. Young girls and boys engage in sex with men and women old enough to be their parents in the mad quest to meet up with the challenges of a depraved global system. Morality has been thrown to the gutters. Nothing anymore is adjudged deviant so long it can yield cash. All these happen at the instance of contemporary globalization which has made the secular western values the global values in order to create a global market for western industries.

Globalization is a principal culprit in the increased violence and lawlessness found in some places and religions. For example, "Muslim fundamentalists resist the crass consumerism of modern Western society" and have in many instances done this violently. Mathew Ashimolowo also observed that "many angry Black young people whether on the streets of United Kingdom, Jamaica, Africa, or the United States consider themselves as being set up by society, especially when society parades before them unaffordable material wealth on television and in exhibitions. They feel that the system has no room for them to live the American dream" (Ashimolowo, 2007). Alvin Poussaint also argues that "economic and psychological survival has often meant that Blacks have had to participate in anti-social acts". He further adds that the reaction of black America is an understandable response to White racism and White marketing which leaves the young Black person unfulfilled (Poussaint, 1972). There is thus, anger in the world caused by globalization, especially among the urban poor who are made to salivate over goods and lifestyles that they cannot afford. This is the more so when religion is made to signify nothing.

CONCLUSION

Globalization has destroyed religion substantially. This began from the era of the Enlightenment but is made practical and entrenched around the world by contemporary globalization. In their quest for

material acquisition and satisfaction, the Western world has maligned religion as one evil that must be chased out of human society because they saw it as an impediment to human progress. They reasoned that for man to attain happiness and fulfilment in life, he must keep religion by the side. This has brought about the globalization of secularism throughout the world. But that has not in any way answer to man's deepest quest for happiness, fulfilment, peace and security. The promotion of global secularism and material prosperity through industrial science and technology has rather compounded man's situation such that instead of feeling happy and fulfilled, man is constantly challenged by the products of his science and technology. The United Nations and other international organizations, including non-governmental agencies, spend so much money annually, besides time and energy, to restore to the world what only religion promises free to mankind but which the Renaissance man quashed as inappropriate to human progress.

This paper could not establish any means by which materialism, whether in the defunct Age of Enlightenment or in the contemporary age of globalization, can provide satisfaction and fulfilment except if anchored on the tenets of a religion which preaches peace, love, equality and sharing together. Materialism as promoted by contemporary globalization, encourages intense competition, extreme individualism and the survival of only the fittest. There is no chapter in that concept for the good of those who are less fit, and these are in the majority. Materialism under contemporary globalization has reduced the majority less-fit-people to mere slaves for the satisfaction and fulfilment of the fittest few. It is this inhumane wide gap between the fittest few and the less-fit majority that encourages this paper to maintain that globalization as a purely economic concept has no relationship whatsoever with a religion whose primary concern is the restoration of man to his Creator through humility, inner peace, love of one's neighbours and togetherness.

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