SECULARIZATION TRENDS IN CONTEXTUALIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN MURANG’A COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to shed light on emerging issues on secularization so as to inform further on how those issues had affected contextualization of Christianity. The study focused on 10 different churches in Murang’a County. It was guided by the following objectives: to show the extent of secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity in Murang’a County, to identify the role of Christians in dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity, to identify challenges experienced by Christians in dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity and to give solutions to challenges experienced by Christians in dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity. The study was guided by functionalist theory by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and functional substitution theory by Arbuckle (1990). The target population was elderly members of the church, church leaders, academicians and youths from the selected churches. Descriptive survey research design, random and purposive sampling methods were used; Questionnaire, interview and observation research instruments were also utilized to collect data. Data was analyzed using explanatory and confirmatory methods. The findings revealed that the secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity are decline of religious authority, overuse of media and technology, increased immorality, loss of Christian social control and Christianity becoming shallow. The study revealed that Christians have roles of engaging church parties in making appropriate church programs, cooperating while addressing the effects of secularization, developing strategies for contextualization of Christianity, producing more literature on the problem and Christian politicians making enactments for helping the church regain its lost image. Improper contextualization of Christianity, cultural interference, confusion on the correct response, criticism, lack of moral guidance and confidence are the challenges experienced by Christians while dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity. The solution to the challenges are reading the word of God, interpreting the word of God correctly, praying, organizing and holding seminars and lastly advising one another on the correct response to effects of secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity.

Key words

Christianity, Secularization, Contextualization, Inculturation, Societalization and Syncretism

Introduction

Secularization is a state in which people’s behaviors are less influenced by religion. However, the term has been defined differently by different scholars. To start with Arbuckle (1990) asserts that the definition of secularization differs according to one’s particular way of defining religion therefore according to him, secularization is the process in which the ways people think and behave are less influenced by religious symbols and institutions that are based on supernatural values.

There is heated debate on the correct definition of secularization, for instance in an effort to reconceptualize secularization, Chaves (1993) refuted Wilson’s (1982) definition as decline of religion and defined secularization as the decline of religious authority in the working social system on an
account that there is no clear empirical evidence on religious decline. Consequently, Magesa (2004) expands on the definition by defining it as a sociological process in which religion becomes increasingly incorporated in social, economic and political life at a particular historical situation resulting to mixed response.

From the foregoing discourse, secularization therefore is taken to mean the current sociological processes in which religion is becoming increasingly incorporated in social, economic and political current life resulting to lack of sacredness as people think and behave without or with less influence of religion. Secularization is as old as humanity, this is in light with Nyamiti’s (1998) connotation that secularization was there in ancient Africa but later it was reshaped and made conspicuous with the coming of the European in 19th century. The reshaping was as result of its widespread; this is confirmed by Mohito (2015) that secularism has widely spread in contemporary Africa and as result become the greatest threat to contextualization of Christianity.

On the other hand, contextualization which is generally taken to mean identifying with prevailing circumstance has also been defined differently by some scholars. According to Hesselgrave (1991) contextualization of Christianity is an attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God’s revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teaching of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts. He further states that contextualization is both verbal and nonverbal and will affect theology, Bible translation, interpretation and application, lifestyle, evangelism, church planting, church growth, church organization, worship style, and indeed, all the components of Christian mission as reflected in the Great Commission.

He restates, therefore to be able to contextualize the gospel in a given culture, a good understanding of the culture and worldview will be required. Nderitu (2014) defines contextualization of Christianity as a way Christian workers apply the gospel of Jesus Christ and Biblical truths to the various cultural contexts in which those Christians live or go to. However, According to Paul II (1975) it was one of the greatest challenges for the church today. The observations by Paul II (1975) is confirmed by (Munuve, 2010) that secularization trends are observed through legal abortion, fornication and low church attendance which are on rise therefore interfering with contextualization of Christianity.

With reference to Christianity, contextualization therefore refers to the ways Christians apply the gospel of Jesus Christ and Biblical truths to different cultural contexts in which they live. It entails relating the gospel to the culture otherwise known as inculturation (Arbuckle, 1990).

It is important to understand secularization in light of African context which Nyamiti (1998) notes that African religious behavior is mainly centered on man’s life in this world. During pre-colonial era the Kikuyu observed traditional religion and were grouped into extremist (karing’a) and liberal (ukabi) (Karanja, 2003). According to Mbiti (1975:13) Agikuyu formed religious ideas, religious beliefs and observed religious ceremonies and rituals, they told proverbs and myths which carried religious meanings, and evolved laws and customs that safeguarded the life of the individual and
community; religion belonged to people and was not founded by a person but ancestors and it did not have sacred books. Prayer was central part of the religion where they prayed to Mwene-Nyaga after a good harvest season and for continuation of harvests (Magesa, 1998:179).

The Agikuyu religion and culture tremendously changed since the arrival of the missionaries. They came to propagate Christianity through the missionary enterprise of evangelization, contextualization and eventually secularization enterprise which is the current problem to African Traditional Religion and Christianity thus affecting contextualization of Christianity. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate on secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity in Murang’a County to shed more light on emerging secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity.

Statement of the Problem

Contextualization process ought to be guided by inculturation for proper incarnation of the gospel message of Christ. However, though the Church has struggled to contextualize Christianity in Murang’a through inculturation, it is challenged by infiltration of secularism due to Murang’a being proximal to Nairobi which is a hub to Christianity but secular practices outweighs them as confirmed by Wachege (1990). Challenges of secularization of Christianity are witnessed through increased constant Church wrangles, high level of irresponsibility, individualism, commercialization and lawlessness that are paradoxical to Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxis. This indicates that the church authority is declining and the church is being used for selfish gains due to secularization.

Purpose of the Study

Despite the fact that the church in Murang’a County had intention and made an effort to contextualize Christianity, it had constantly been opposed by secularization trends which had not been adequately dealt with in spite of being debated on in major urban centers like Nairobi. The purpose of this study therefore was to shed light on emerging issues on secularization in growing towns so as to inform further on how those issues had affected contextualization of Christianity.

Significance of the Study

Secularization trends have enormous effects on contextualization of Christianity in modern society. However it had not exhaustively been established on how Christians could respond to it for proper contextualization of Christianity especially in Murang’a. This study helps Christians to deal with the effects of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity. It helps to boost the Christian understanding of their beliefs and practices. This enables Christians to have a meaningful substantial worship during time of worship as the main Christian activity. The study also provides important information to researchers in the aspects of secularization and contextualization of Christianity that has been deemed to have scarce written authority. Finally, the study is of great importance to the Kenyan society by creating awareness about secularism that par tabs many individuals in the country.

Justification of the Study

Murang’a County has been Christianized since the beginning of the 20th century. However, secularization has posed challenge to contextualization of Christianity or inculturation of Christianity in the county. There was need to investigate the challenge
to offer insights that enlighten the church in its ministry of evangelization. Significantly, most studies on secularization tend to focus on major urban centers like Nairobi and rural areas are ignored. Therefore, this study is a contributory literature to secularization trends in growing urban centers and rural areas. The results of this study are used by Christians in Murang’a and Kenya at large to ensure proper response on secularization trends as related to Christianity.

Research Design

Donald & Delno (2006) ascertained that Research design is the arrangement of conditions for collections and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose. The researcher used descriptive survey, which according to Orodho (2003) is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals and is best on collecting data on social issues. The researcher utilized descriptive research design because it is more than just collection of data; it involves measurement, classification, analysis, comparison and interpretation of data (Orodho and Kombo, 2002).

Location of the Study

The research was carried out in selected sample population all found in Murang’a County previously referred to as Fort Hall, Murang’a County is mainly inhabited by the Kikuyu community and has its headquarter in Murang’a town. Murang’a town lies on latitude of -0.7167(0˚43’0) and longitude of 37.1500(37˚8’60E). As a result of varying altitudes, Murang’a County gets quite cold during May to mid-August, including experiencing hails. The town lies low, a bit hilly with an altitude of 4120ft (meters) above sea level. The area occupants carry out farming like banana, coffee and tea on large scales. Livestock rearing and trading are also practiced. The occupants have strong Kikuyu culture found in music and dance (mugithi), language, food, dressing and industrious lifestyle. A part from Agikuyu being the majority, other communities have been attracted to Murang’a County to carry out economic activities. Christianity is the major religion practiced, followed by significant Islamic religion and a few without religions (Ministry of planning and devolution, 2013).

Target Population

It is estimated that Murang’a County has 850 churches. Catholic and ACK are the predominant churches consecutively (Ministry of devolution and planning, 2013). The researcher targeted 10 different churches representing 1.17% of the total churches in Murang’a County. The churches are many in Murang’a County but the researcher picked the Catholic, Anglican Church of Kenya, Hope and Victory Christian International Ministry, and African Independent Pentecostal Churches of Africa, Seventy Day Adventist, Full Gospel, Salvation Army, Pentecostal Evangelism Fellowship of Africa, Word Temple Church, and Redeemed Gospel. The researcher purposively selected the above churches by making sure that Pentecostals are more than protestants, catholic and African Independent churches because the Pentecostals are the most popular ones.

The population included 4 elderly Christians which forms part of aged population that was 64,143 by 2012, 2 church leaders/representatives which is part of the reproductive group of 232,164, 2 youths that is part of the 241,629 youths by 2012 according to (Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2013) 2 academicians from every
church. The researcher therefore targeted 40 elderly Christians, 20 church elders, 20 church youths and 20 academicians which totaled to a population of 100 participants that represented 0.0102% of the total Murang’a population.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Murang’a County constitutes 8 sub-counties namely; Kiharu, Kahuro, Mathioya, Kangema, Maragua, Kandara, Kigumo and Gatanga however the researcher focused only on 3 sub counties which are Maragua sub-county, Kiharu sub-county and Kahuro which represented the whole county. Precisely, 4 churches were drawn from Maragua sub-county due to her high population rate, 3 churches from Kiharu Sub-County and 3 from Kahuro sub-county that were deemed to have low population.

The church leaders, youth, academicians and the elderly members were drawn from 850 churches. The researcher used systematic random sampling technique by grouping the groups and picking the designated number to participate in the study. Every 10th and 20th youth, 2nd and 3rd leaders, secretariat or their representatives were picked and 1st, 5th, 10th and 15th elderly Christians were picked and 1st and 3rd academicians were picked to participate in the study from selected churches. This method was effective because it yielded results that were generalized to a large population. Purposive sampling technique was also used to target a group of academicians, leaders or their representatives.

Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaire, interview and observation schedule as the research instruments to collect data.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire Return Rate

One hundred questionnaires were issued out of which seventy four were returned and twenty six not returned. The questionnaire returned was above average which is above the recommended 60% in the area of social sciences (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003) as in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of questionnaires issued</th>
<th>Number of questionnaire returned</th>
<th>Number of questionnaire not returned</th>
<th>% of questionnaires issued</th>
<th>% of questionnaires returned</th>
<th>% of questionnaires not returned</th>
<th>% of invalid Questionnaires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table the large positive participation (74%) indicated how weighty the subject of secularization on Christianity was and thus need for a solution.

Questionnaire return rate per specific Churches

Seventy four percent of total questionnaires issued were returned from ten churches and
their capitation is shown in percent as follows per church which helped the researcher to assess the level of commitment to church issues.

![Figure 1: Questionnaire Return Rate per Church](image)

From the above chart there was good participation especially by Catholic Church (15%), Anglican Church of Kenya (14%) and The Salvation Army (14%). Despite the above there was low Participation by Pentecostal Evangelic Fellowship of Africa (6%) and African Independed Pentecostal Church of Africa (6%) this shows how various churches have different commitment levels to religious issues in addition to researcher’s observations. This varied levels of commitments by churches to religious matters points out the secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity as pointed out by Arbuckle (1990:59) among other scholars.

**Demographic Information of the Participants**

**Gender of the Participants**

Participants were asked to give their genders and the results are as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Gender of the Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above table, the males (71%) were popular participants than females (29%) this indicated the ratio of gender participation in the church. Males are more active in church activities than their female counterparts.

**Age of the participants**

![Age of the participants](image)

**Figure 2: Age of the participants**

Figure 2 indicates that the age bracket that robustly participated in the study was age (31-40) 45% followed by age (41-50) 28% and age (51-60) 16%, age (20-30) 9%, age (61-70) 2% and no participation at age (71 and above). The high participation by age (31-40) 45% is relatively due to active involvement in religious issues by this age bracket. The youth which according to the study age (20-30) 28% does not bother so much about religiosity despite being present in the church, instead they are committed to other personal beneficial matters this indicates how individualism has affected contextualization of Christianity. Age bracket 70 and above did not participate in the study as they were very few and the few present were not concerned with the study as most claimed they are of the old days. This is concluded as due to syncretism which is one of the challenges experienced by Christians in dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity as attributed by (Omuga 2010).

**Marital Status of the Participants**

Marital status was established to help determine the social control role of religion so as to find out how secularization trends have affected it.
Figure 3 points out that 46% are married, 35% single, 16% divorced, 2% widows and 1% widowers. A large percentage (46%) of married people shows that there is religious role in those churches. However, the relatively large presentation 35% of single persons where as the majority of the participants are age (31-40) 47% raises questions on the religious roles in these churches. It therefore shows that there is decline of the religious role in these churches as the institution of marriage is not strong as is further confirmed by a relatively large percent (16%) of divorce in the church which is condemned in the scripture 1st Corinthians 7:10-11 thus it is expected to be zero or less than 2%.

**Level of Secularization Trends in Contextualization of Christianity**

The degree at which various secularization trends affected contextualization of Christianity was established and the analysis is as shown in the figure below. This helped to find out which secularization trends affect contextualization of Christianity.
The above figure indicates the following on the level at which secularization trends affects contextualization of Christianity. 40 people ascertained that science and technology affects contextualization of Christianity very high, 20 highly, 11 moderately, 3 lowly and non very lowly. Twenty eight (28) people agreed that modernism affects contextualization of Christianity very high, 27 highly, 19 moderately and non lowly and very lowly. Nineteen (19) agreed that societalization affects contextualization of Christianity very high, 13 highly, 30 moderately 12 lowly and non very lowly. 9 people agreed that individualism affects contextualization of Christianity very high, 29 highly, 21 moderately, 15 very low. Finally 16 people said that human rights and liberty affects contextualization of Christianity very high, 27 highly, 19 moderately, 8 lowly and 4 very low.

From the above analysis it is evident that science and technology affects contextualization of Christianity, followed by modernism, societalization, human rights and liberty and finally individualism which least affects contextualization of Christianity in addition to poor leadership, urbanization and education as attributed by most of the participants through an interview with the researcher in conformation with (Arbuckle 1990) and (Momen 1999) observations on these trends.

4.1.5 Secularization Trends in Contextualization of Christianity

Effects of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity were tabulated as follows. This pictured out the various secularization trends that affected contextualization of Christianity.
Figure 5 shows the different degrees at which secularization trends affects contextualization of Christianity and helped to affirm the secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity. Thirty two (32) participants strongly agreed, 30 agreed and 12 disagreed there was no somewhat agree and strongly disagree that secularization has led to overuse of media and technology.

Notably, 6 participants strongly agreed 20 agreed 28 somewhat agreed 16 disagreed and 4 strongly disagreed that those who are Christian join atheists. Twelve (12) strongly agreed, 36 agreed, 20 somewhat agreed, 4 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed and that it leads to loss of Christian social control.

While 8 participants strongly agreed, 48 agreed, 8 somewhat agreed, 2 disagreed and 8 strongly disagreed that secularization leads to decline of religious authority. Twenty eight (28) strongly agreed, 30 agreed, 7 somewhat agreed, 5 disagreed and 4 strongly disagreed that it leads to increased immorality.

Also, 4 participants strongly agreed 28 agreed, 12 somewhat agreed, 6 disagreed and 20 strongly disagreed that secularization trends leads to lack of faith in God. Finally 7 strongly agreed, 54 agreed, 10 somewhat agreed 0 disagreed and 3 strongly disagreed that secularization trends lead to liberty.

From the chart in order of degrees from high to low secularization trends have affected contextualization of Christianity by leading to decline of religious authority, overuse of media and technology, increased immorality in the church, loss of Christian social control, liberty, lack of faith in God and finally Christians joining atheists. This confirms that decline of religious authority, overuse of media and technology, increased immorality in the church and loss of Christian social control is due to secularization trends on contextualization of
Christanity as they rated high on the likert scale.

The Role of Christians in Dealing with Secularization Trends in Contextualization of Christianity

Through an interview conducted on 1st to 16th February 2016 by the researcher, several roles to be played by Christians in dealing with the effects of secularization trends arose. One of the participants, the pastor of hope and victory Christian international on 14th February 2016 asserted that secularization has been affecting his church negatively especially among the youths. He said that he has been trying to curb the situation by involving the youths themselves to come up with programs that are more appealing to them. These programs were special period during the service for youths to entertain the congregation with songs, having seminars and night vigils for specific groups separately and using more modern instruments .He however said that some programs did not last long as they began singing secular songs on the pulpit using the new instruments and it became more challenging to teach the word during the night for youth groups thus the programs were stagnating. He said there was this challenge due to lack of cooperation from other members of the church and other denominations. So the Christians have a role to cooperate while tackling the effects of secularization and other church members to incorporate other strategies according to the scripture in dealing with secularism.

Another finding on the role of Christians found out during the study was to develop an appropriate strategy for appropriate contextualization of Christianity. With the help of the relevant authorities the researcher came up with the forthcoming model entitled contextualization of Christianity in secular society in addition to some developed by Arbuckle (1990) on inculturation of Christianity. This model involves several aspects that should be treated separately and then provide the true Christianity in ever changing secular African society. The major role of a Christian in a secular society is to ensure appropriate contextualization of Christianity. This process has to begin with the understanding of God and the person of Christ an incarnate son of God John 1:14 NKJV in light of the scripture alone (sola scriptura). All the secular practices and convictions should be evaluated and monitored by the scripture to ensure those practices and convictions positively contribute to Christianity and growth of both the local and universal church. Secular practices that are unnecessary to the church as determined by the scripture should be shunned away by man. The scripture should be taken as a whole in the necessary African culture without mutations or speculations but with conformity. Institutional substitution must also take place for appropriation of African culture in understanding of Christianity. The church as part of the world to involve in control of secular practices so that the world also benefits from it thus enhancing symbiotic relationship between the world and Christianity consubstantiate in the church. This interpretation is summarized in the figure on the subsequent page for proper illustration of the relationship
Additionally, another role of Christians to dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity provided during the study was for Christian scholars to research and publish more literature on the issue of secularization. This is because secularization was making Christianity more. Further to explain the place of God in secular society. Lastly, legislators to intervene and make enactments for the church to regain its authority and social control roles by the state controlling some of the secular practices that are unethical and are not within the church jurisdictions.

**Challenges Experienced By Christians in Dealing with Secularization Trends in Contextualization of Christianity**

The challenges experienced by Christians to dealing with the effects of Christianity were determined by assessing several of them
using the likert scale. The results were analyzed as follows.

![Challenges experienced by Christians in dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity](image)

**Figure 7: Challenges experienced by Christians in dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity.**

In the above figure challenges experienced by Christians to dealing with the effects of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity were rated and established in terms of frequencies in different churches as: improper contextualization of Christianity, cultural interference, confusion on correct response followed by criticism by secular Christians, diminishing faith in God and lastly generational differences. Language also emerged as another challenge and finally it was established through observation by the researcher that most of the parishioners probably lacked moral guidance and confidence to explain to the members the appropriate ways of contextualization of Christianity, this is probably due to fear of being affected by secularization but this has to be confirmed.

**Solution to Challenges Experienced by Christians in Dealing with Secularization**

Various solutions were proposed by the participants in correspondence to challenges experienced by Christians in dealing with the secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity. To start with on the challenge of improper contextualization of Christianity the solutions provided are: prayer for proper contextualization, organize retreat and seminars for people to be taught on Christianity, preaching the word of God correctly, interpret scripture properly, have church mentorship programs, avoid secular practices and have proper leadership.

The remedy to Cultural Interference is understanding the place of culture in the church, understanding the place of God in
In response to criticism by secular Christians, Christians should pray, get facts from the scripture, educate on church doctrines, practice tolerance to understand them, fellowship with likeminded members, organize interdenominational meetings, preach to the them more often, provide awareness about contextualization of Christianity, involve them more in church activities, and lastly Christians having clear understanding of their doctrines and continue spreading the Gospel.

Lastly in responding to diminishing faith in God, Christians should pray, read the word of God, trust God, avoid ungodly practices, create awareness about diminishing faith in God to fellow Christians, have revivals and seminars, improve church attendance, advise each other on the issue, practice biblical teachings, read Christian literature, have correct leaders and partake in church sacraments.

From the above analysis on the solution to challenges experienced by Christians to dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity, it is clear that the common solutions to challenges experienced by Christians on dealing with the effects of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity is reading the word of God and interpreting it correctly, praying, having forums such as seminar to learn more about the issues and lastly advising each other on the correct directions and response to secularization trends.

**Discussion of Findings**

**Extent of Secularization Trends in Contextualization of Christianity**

Participants were asked to rate how various secularization trends impacted on contextualization of Christianity by rating
using the likert scale as very high, high, and moderate, low and finally very low on each of those trends. The data collected helped to generate the information that derived knowledge about the subject of secularization on contextualization of Christianity.

The large group basing on strongest rate of very high asserted science and technology is leading secularization trend on contextualization of Christianity. In order of high rating scale (very high) the second secularization trend was modernism, then societalization, human rights and liberty and finally individualism. These trends using the highest scale give the true picture that indeed there is secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity in Murang’a County. This is based on the assumption that any very high rating to particular trend justifies the presence of the trend despite not being in Christians’ domain. The very high response (40%) on science and technology on the scale of very high explains how the science and technology is a major concern to Christians in contextualization of Christianity as noted by Gbenga (2013) that there were churches that only existed on airwaves.

In connection to the above response, as observed in most churches during the study, science and technology takes seemingly important role, there is almost no worship to go on in case of power shortage or delay for the person to operate the electronic machines otherwise referred to as the system. There is a lot of attention to technology rather than the core business of worship. Pastors on the pulpits and their assistants tend to use the Bible stored in their phones than the literal Bible. As a result a lot of time is unaccounted for; in addition these forms of bible are subjected to mutilations to meet the system programming to be utilized in different electronic devices. It was mentioned by one of the parishioner that he didn’t often go to church simply he could listen to the word of God through the Television and the internet. These findings are in connection to Emile Durkheim’s (1858-1917) that religion will decline due to science and technology. Truly, televangelism should not substitute the literal church worship as it lacks important aspects like communion and participation in partaking of sacraments. This study does not advocate for shunning away of technology but it brings out the dangers of it in contextualization of Christianity, therefore Christians should take caution when utilizing it to avoid being victims for appropriate contextualization of Christianity in this secularizing world.

Modernism rated second with 28 % which is still high, this kind of response indicates despite the fact that it is not in public domain the trend still exists and is a major trend in contextualization of Christianity. This is in line with Mbiti (1969) who ascertains that Africa is going through tremendous and rapid changes in every aspects of life many individuals indicated that Christianity opposes Christianity in that it attempts to attack the very important pillars of Christianity like belief in God, Jesus Christ and the Holy scripture. This is by failing to rely on God in moments of crisis and achievement but on modern science and reasoning. Additionally, fashion has evolved and is supported by human freedom which is still part of modernism. Because of this human sexuality has been modified to suit individual desires and choices. To exemplify on sexuality, sex has been commercialized and this infiltrates into Christianity challenging the understanding that one is the temple of the holy spirit and should not sin against it (1st Corinthians 6:18-20). More so another meaning of
human sexuality has been made practical through practice of same sex marriage, test-tube babies and human cloning. There are no shared values that Christianity can constantly abide to due to modernism as the secularization trend in contextualization of Christianity.

Another trend that rated high and third one was societalization. Bruce (1992) listed societalization as one of the main factors that was reducing the power of religion in the modern world by individuals making religion social and enmeshed in the community. In other words Christianity disappears into the large community. This trend makes Christians to lose focus on the true Christianity as they concentrate on making their group relevant to their situation to an extend of disputing religious tenets. Logically from the response, societalization is among one of the major secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity in Murang’a County. This was observed through numerous churches but low Christian values witnessed. Christianity is porous and this is witnessed through lack of Christian marriages. Low Church attendance as observed in church archives and minimal love witnessed through the way Christians treat one another based on status and not sense of brotherhood advocated by Christianity.

Individualism although it rated low on the scale of very high, the 9% acceptance by Christians indicates awareness about it. The low rating could be due to individualism being practiced by many individuals or Christians who therefore judge themselves. Due to the state of being victims there is no moral confidence to openly face it. This in turn led to the rating witnessed. However the 9% owes us an explanation about the secularization trend. According to observation made many Christians tend to focus on their personal states of wellbeing. An essence of African communism and Christian brotherhood is constantly fading away. The tithing system and offertory is registered low in most of the churches. This is simply due to commercial thoughts attached to the practices of tithe and offertory. Many Christians think it is better for them to use money rather than give out as offertory yet it will still be misused by their pastors. In the best option on giving Christians can only give little and make use of the rest than giving according to their ability in accordance with Biblical teachings because of the selfish desires. There is sense on the misuse of the offertory by pastor justified in constant leadership wrangles that emanates from finance. Despite the abuse of money the solution is not to change church doctrines but to find better solutions to financial matters.

Additionally, human rights and liberty rated second last on the scale of very high. However, this cannot make us dismiss it that it is not secularization trend. It still rates high using the scale of high at 27%. This is an indication that despite many Christians probably not realizing that human rights and liberty affects contextualization of Christianity, there is an agreement for those who are made aware about it that it affects. Still it is agreeable that human rights and liberty is not a major secularization trend as it is the only trend that recorded a response on the rate of very low. Consequently, it is hard to establish whether this rating is realistic or it is due to the influence of the issue everyone wants to be positive about in the society. This poses a moral dilemma but we can ascertain through what was observed that indeed participants were aware about human rights and liberty. What they didn’t know as noted earlier could be that it was secularization trend and therefore the rating to naturally support the positive and the ones
who were aware that it was secularization trend rating it high.

Finally, on individualism, many churches have been opened and some of them indeed are not truly churches. These churches are managed by very rich sponsored who even pay people to join them. There are no correct Christian teachings in those churches and the result is indeed inappropriate Christianity full of “miracles”. The trend of individualism has led to the correct Christian church becoming more and more porous as flocks keep on moving from one church to another to compare the material benefits they may get. In conclusion, on the extent of secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity in order of very high to low, Sciences and technology is very high, then modernism, societalization, human rights and liberty and finally individualism that least affects contextualization of Christianity. Other secularization trends that emerged during the study are poor leadership styles, urbanization and education.

Secularization Trends in Contextualization of Christianity

Secularization trends affect contextualization of Christianity in many different ways. This was assessed and details of how these trends affected contextualization of Christianity provided. The likert scale was utilized to rate various activities that could possibly emanate from secularization trends. The scales of strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, disagree and strongly disagree were used. Notably, the scale was not build on every secularization trend but was constructed to obtain information on all trend generally. This was because most secularization trends led to similar effects and thus there was no need to specially delve on each of them. Some of the guiding effects of secularization trends were Christian joining atheists, loss of Christian social control, decline of religious authority, increased immorality in the church, lack of faith in God, liberty and overuse of media and technology.

From the data collected and analyzed, using the scale of strongly agree. The order of the secularization trend in contextualization of Christianity would be overuse of media and technology at 32%, increased immorality in church at 28%, loss of Christian social control at 12%, decline of religious authority at 8%, liberty at 7%, Christian joining atheists at 6% and finally lack of faith in God at 4%.

The above response speaks loud about secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity. Secularization trend such as science and technology results to abuse of science and technology in different ways. The abuse of science and technology rates high because many people are exposed to technology Christians included. Science and technology is abused through addition in that Christians fail to engage in Christian activities like prayer and reading the Bible. Technology abuse may also be in form of spreading hate messages, rumors and erosive materials on the internet using the cell-phones.

The second effect on the same rating was increased immorality in the church. Immorality emanates from secularization in different dimensions. To start with, in terms of permissiveness where by people tend to avoid attention to morality. They fail to recognize the human instinct of dignity by assuming they have choice to that, they dress and apply erosive fashion in the church, fail to observe sexual church guidelines in exercise of their freedom. Secondly, immorality is one of the
distinctive features of secularism therefore is that it is witnessed in many spheres of life and thus it always finds its way into the church. The rating is realistic as immorality is one of the key and major effects of secularization that the church has always struggled with for many centuries. The church ought therefore to come with approaches to deal with this impact of secularization trends.

Another effect of secularization trend on contextualization of Christianity was loss of Christian social control which rated at 12%. Despite loss of Christian social control rating third; it is very worrying to the church since the key role of the church is to keep social control. If it fails to keep its mandate due to secularization trends then Christianity is at stake. This explains the rampant evils in society. The high level of corruption, immorality, irresponsible sexual behavior, civil wars and enmity results from secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity. The evils are committed with no parameter to control the instruments and therefore every day there is new fresh evil reported almost everywhere .The church should use its power not to fight one another but to re-think about where it missed direction and control the society by keeping the government on toes to execute its mandate vested in it by the people. This is in line with Nthamburi’s (1995) recommendation that the church should indigenize.

Similarly another very shocking effect of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity is decline of religious authority that rated at 8%.The church is vested with religious authority to perform leadership duties in the world. Henceforth the church losing religious authority implies lack of leadership. The scripture connotes that authority comes from God (Romans 13:1-2) therefore Christians should be submissive to rulers and masters (1st Peter 2:13-25).The church should be firm and regain its authority for proper leadership in the world for it to remain relevant. This is in response to Christianity becoming obsolete.

Finally, liberty, Christian joining atheists and lack of faith in God rated low but the rating is a justification of the existence of the states. In the recent times the atheist movement was registered in Kenya, a country where the majority of the people are Christians. This is a clear indication that people are joining atheists and as result some remaining Christians start doubting God making them to lose faith in Him. The two situations are made possible by liberty that provides freedom to do anything feasible due to secularization that removes Godly guidance.

**Role of Christians in Dealing with Secularization Trends**

The role of Christians in dealing with secularization trends starts with the realization that there are secularization trends. They ought to understand that activities that are not driven by the word of God and ignore religion and its role are secular. Christians have a role of coming up with church programs that will not encourage secularization in contextualization of Christianity but instead utilize it for proper understanding of Christianity. Those programs must involve almost all members of the church so that they have long life. This is in relation to constant failures of programs expressed in most of the churches as a result of boredom of the youths that is precipitated by secularization trends. The programs also have to be expanded to involve revivals, deliverance and Bible sharing that would result to true religious experiences and
salvation. Additionally, cooperation is key among different churches. It will ensure there are harmonious relationships among those churches when it comes to responding to secularization in contextualization of Christianity. As it is coming out, Christians have a role to cooperate while dealing with the effect of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity.

Subsequently, another role established in the study is developing an appropriate strategy for appropriate contextualization of Christianity. Arbuckle (1990) provided one; however the approach only deals with contextualization of Christianity in ATR but not directly in Secular society. According to him, Christianity should find a place in African culture and not other way round. This translated in secular society, the scholar as one the Christians developed an approach for contextualization of Christianity in consideration of key aspects of African Christian society. The aspects of culture, Christianity and secularization trend should be treated separately and the necessary cultural practices and beliefs be utilized while unnecessary be shunned away for appropriate Christianity in secularizing society. The necessary secular practices should be assessed in light of the scripture which is pegged on God and His incarnate Son Jesus Christ. Those necessary secularization trends are explained in African contest for appropriate culture that Christianity will find its place contextually.

In addition to Christians admitting that there is secularization, making holistic appropriate church programs, cooperating while responding to secularization trends and developing appropriate strategy in contextualization of Christianity in African Christian secularizing society is important. Christian scholars have a role of carrying out more studies in the area of secularization to avoid making Christianity porous and redefine the place of Christianity in the secular world which the church is part of. The final role of Christians on this issue is influencing the legislators so that they can make enactments that may help the church to regain its authority and social control roles. The state being a democratic one should control some of the secular practices that are immoral and not in church jurisdiction.

Lastly it should control the speedy spread of secularism which is not helpful to the state by not registering secular organizations. The above discourse indicates that there are possible solutions to secularization trends and hence every Christian should involve in one way or another in dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity.

**Challenges Experienced By Christians in Dealing with Secularization Trends in Contextualization of Christianity**

Using the likert scale, several challenges experienced by Christians in dealing with secularization trends were established. From the scale, the order of those challenges from most experienced challenge to less experienced ones was improper contextualization of Christianity, then cultural interference, confusion on the correct response, criticism by secular Christians, diminishing faith in God and lastly generational differences. To start with, improper contextualization of Christianity rated high because of its being the end result of secularization. This was in public domain that Christianity had real changed as a result of secularization. This was witnessed through the struggle of Christians to remain relevant to Christianity but failing and thus not practicing proper Christianity. These resulted to practices that only seemed to be
Christian but were secular and influenced Christianity to a great extent. This was observed in the formation of splinter groups in the church hidden in the idea of spreading Christianity but the truth is to fulfill personal material gains. Cultural interference has resulted to confusion on the correct response as it rated third. The close rating between cultural interference and confusion on correct response indicates that there is cause effect between the two and they are challenges to Christian response to secularization trends.

Cultural interference was another challenge experienced. The Agikuyu community is an example of the community that reacted firmly to Christianity due to the need to conserve its culture of polygamy, circumcision of girl child and consumption of local brew (Kenyatta, 1938). Because of this, from the observation the conservatism aspect by extremists (karing’a) is still firm and it is creating room for infiltration of secularization into Christianity as it refuses to interpret the secular practices in light of the Scripture. This will help to utilize important parts of aspects like science and technology to understand the gospel and spread it further to counter other perennial secularization trends like individualism.

Just as Mugambi (1989-33) had observed that some Africans accepted Christian faith without question and criticism, the same is currently translated where by some Christians joining secular trends without questioning those trends. Christians confuse as to whether reject and never to listen to anything to do with secular or enmesh them in their life and “enjoy” the good company and privileges “enjoyed” by the secular people. This divided state attracts critics from another Christian group that is liberal to secularism leading to diminishing faith in God.

Lastly in this section, it was confirmed that there is the challenge of syncretism resulting from generational differences. The youths feel without trends like science and technology there is no proper Christianity and the elderly feels science and technology visible in modern dance and music is evil and should not have a place in the church. This is a challenge with a thinner understanding and therefore tolerance for contextualization of Christianity should be exercised. Lastly and very important is the challenge of lack of moral guidance and confidence by church members to appropriately contextualize Christianity due to being part of the perpetrators of the secular practices for personal gains.

**Solution to Challenges Experienced by Christians in Dealing with secularization Trends in Contextualization of Christianity**

Most solutions provided in responding to challenges of improper contextualization of Christianity, cultural interference, fear of syncretism, and confusion on correct response to secularization trends are similar. This could be due to strong correlations between those challenges. However, when youths were asked to explain some of the solutions they mentioned, they respondent hesitantly and this was probably due to relatively high level of illiteracy on matters of Christianity among the youths. Some of the solutions derived from the data in dealing with the challenges that emanated from dealing with secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity are praying more often for proper contextualization of Christianity. This involves all Christians praying for appropriation of Christianity in all circumstances.

Another solution was appreciating the Traditional African Religion and culture into
the context of Christianity to avoid confusion on correct response to secularization and fear of syncretism. Appropriating necessary secular trends into Christianity is also necessary to avoid the result of doubt by Christians posing a challenge of critics by secular Christians. Generally in dealing with the challenges, Christians are actually supposed to pray, read the word of God and interpreting it correctly more often, having different meeting programs like workshops, conferences and seminars to debate, discussing and providing more clear solutions are imperative solutions that should be considered by the churches. The solutions provided should be employed correctly as most important solution to those challenges.

**Summary of Findings**

There was good participation as 74% of the participants returned the questionnaires therefore the subject matter under investigation was of concern to many parishioners. Different churches participated but Catholic Church and Anglican Church of Kenya were unanimous in questionnaire return that is 15% and 14% consecutively of the total questionnaire issued pointing out that the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of Kenya were more committed and concerned with the religious role therefore they have not much been affected by secularization trends. Interview showed that there was a lot of liberty and conservatism confirming the existence of secularization in the church. The most active age bracket was age (31-40) 41% asserting it is well connected to the church issues compared to youth group age (20-30) 28% where as youths are expected to be more active. Youths don’t bother much about Christianity, despite being present in the church they are there for personal gains like meeting friends therefore religion becoming porous. This could be due to a lot of freedom in their space as confirmed by (Ebousi 1984).

It was established that various secularization trends affect contextualization of Christianity at different levels. The leading trend is science and technology observed through televangelism, use of phones, iPads and computers. Other trends in order of priority are modernism, societalization, human rights and liberty, individualism which was rated least followed by poor leadership, urbanization, and the very least education.

The study revealed that secularization trends result to decline of religious authority, over use of media and technology, increased immorality as observed in permissiveness and indecent fashion and loss of Christian social control. This is confirmed by existence of divorce 2% and many single people 16% whereas most of them are between age (31-40)47% an age one expected to be married in the present prevailing scientific proves.

The research realized the roles of Christians in dealing with the effects of secularization trends as engaging church parties in coming up with appropriate programs to avoid becoming victims of secularization trends, cooperating while tackling the effects of secularization on Christianity. Another role was developing an appropriate strategy for appropriate contextualization of Christianity, the model for contextualization of Christianity in the secular society was developed to attempt ensure appropriate Christianity in secularizing world. Lastly, Christian scholars should publish more literature and legislators to make enactments to help the church regain its authority and social control roles.
The challenges experienced by Christians to dealing with the effects of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity came up in order of priority as improper contextualization of Christianity, cultural interference, confusion on correct response, criticism by secular Christians, lack of moral guidance and confidence to explain appropriate ways of contextualization of Christianity due to fear of being associated with secularization yet they are devoted Christians or due to fear of being identified with secularization as victims whether they are or not.

Finally solutions to challenges experienced by Christians on dealing with the effects of secularization trend on contextualization of Christianity were identified as reading the word of God, interpreting the word of God correctly, praying for God’s help, having regular forums like seminars to learn more about the issues and advising each other on the correct response.

**Conclusion**

This study reaffirms that decline of religious authority, overuse of media and technologies, increased immorality, loss of Christian social control and Christian religion becoming porous is as a result of secularization trends. The secularization trends that affect contextualization of Christianity are science and technology, modernism, societalization, human rights and liberty, individualism, poor leadership, urbanization and education. The roles of Christians in dealing with the effects of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity are engaging church parties to make appropriate programs, Christians to cooperate while tackling the effects of secularization trends, develop more strategies for contextualization of Christianity, publish more literature and legislators to make an enactment give the church its societal space. Improper contextualization of Christianity, cultural interference, confusion on correct response, criticism by secular Christians and lack of moral guidance and confidence are the challenges experienced by Christians to dealing with the effects of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity. Reading the word of God, interpreting the word of God correctly, praying for God’s guidance and help, organizing seminars to learn about the issues and advising each other on correct direction on response to secularization trends are the solutions to challenges experienced by Christians on dealing with the effects of secularization trends on contextualization of Christianity.

**Recommendations**

In connection to the findings, the study makes the following recommendations in an effort to deal with the problem of secularization trends in contextualization of Christianity.

i. Christians to read more the word of God to appropriately understand the place of Christianity in secular society to continue contextualizing Christianity therefore making it relevant in their life

ii. There is need for creation of awareness by Christians among the youths about the existence of secularization trends and their effects on Christianity in the society

iii. The government needs to enact and enforce laws to protect the place of Christianity so that it regains its original image and continue playing its social control role in the secular society

iv. Different churches to continuously organize seminars and conferences to
discuss the effects of secularization trends and more possible solutions to the problem

v. More studies to be conducted in the area of secularization in connection to contextualization of Christianity

vi. Available literature on African Christianity on inculturation of Christianity to be utilized in understanding secularization to avoid confusions on the correct response

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