

Journal of **Sociology, Psychology & Religious Studies**



A Moral Response to the Corruption of Individualism in Kenya Today

**Rev. Patrick Gachuru Kabui, Rev. Prof. Richard Rwiza and
Rev. Dr. Samuel Bedijo**

ISSN: 2706-6622

A Moral Response to the Corruption of Individualism in Kenya Today

^{1*}Rev. Patrick Gachuru Kabui, ²Rev. Prof. Richard Rwiza & ³Rev. Dr. Samuel Bedijo

¹Faculty of Theology, Department of Moral Theology
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

^{2,3}Faculty of Theology, Department of Moral Theology
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

*Corresponding author's email address: gachurupatrick6@gmail.com

How to cite this article: Kabui, P. G., Rwiza, R. & Bedijo, S. (2021). A Moral Response to the Corruption of Individualism in Kenya Today. *Journal of Religious Studies*, 3(3), 54-69.
<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t3003>

Abstract

This paper undertakes a critical review of *a Moral Response to the Corruption of Individualism in Kenya*. It is an attempt to investigate the challenge of individualism. Promotion of justice and peace in the world is part of the constitutive mission of the Church. In fulfilling this mission, the church challenges the oppressive structures in society. Research in Kenya reveals that the presence of individualism has affected the people in almost every aspect of life: families, community, governance, religion, land tenure, and access to natural resources. This has resulted into numerous consequences such as inter-ethnic conflicts, poverty, destruction of life and property, and environmental degradation. These factors slow down authentic development and impede the evolution of peoples towards greater socio-economic and spiritual well-being. The study found that the root cause to these challenges is individualism. Since authentic peace must be built upon the values of the dignity of every individual and of solidarity among the people, the study proposed a communitarian ethic as a possible cure to this challenge. This study is an advocacy for the promotion of values such as: justice, peace, human dignity, reconciliation, option for the poor, solidarity and similar. Basing on the Sacred Scriptures, Church tradition, African traditional values and experience, the study has provided numerous recommendations that may help in building a society that values a communitarian ethic. The recommendations invite the church, government, community, and every individual to take part in building a society harmonized by justice and peace.

Keywords: *Church teachings, Corruption of Individualism, Kenya*

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t3003>

1.0 Introduction

Socioeconomic conflicts in Kenya continue to escalate owing to resource/social disparity, bad governance characterized by corruption and individualism. While the majority of the Kenyan population competing for the scarce available resources, there are a few individualistic rich persons owning and controlling massive resources mostly acquired through corrupt deals and looting of public resource. Some of the rich have acquired their wealth through unjust means, including corruption and land grabbing from the community. This imbalance in the access of resources is a clear sign of injustice, a problem which makes it difficult for the realization of peace. This is individualism, that spirit in which one is locked in one oneself, and seeks to attain selfish goals and rights. It is opposed to communitarian spirit that focuses on group goals.

Individualism is “that spirit in which one is locked in one oneself,”¹ a vice opposed to communitarian ethic necessary for harmonies co-existence. Individualism is understood as a lifestyle that stresses individual goals and the benefits of the individual person as opposed to togetherness that focuses on community goals, what is best for the collective group, and personal relationships. In the 1910 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, individualism is described as: “...the tendency to magnify individual liberty, as against external authority, and individual activity, as against associated activity... through all forms of individualism runs the note of emphasis upon the importance of *self* in opposition to either restraint or assistance from without.”² According to Tekeshi Mamamura, individualism is a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and the contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasize rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages against associating with others.³

An individualistic person is motivated by personal rewards and benefits. Individualistic persons set personal goals and objectives based on self without caring about what others might think, say, feel or do. Individualism destroys the fabric that joins the society together and as a result the poor and the weak remain with no one to promote them, hinders the achievement of justice among all people in equal measure because only one-party benefits. To reach this goal, rights and duties in basic institutions of society need to be assigned fairly, the benefits and burdens of social cooperation would be appropriately distributed⁴.

In addition, the individualism of some political leaders and various individuals within the community violates commutative justice that ought to prevail in various agreements. Also, individualism encourages actions such as, corruption and grabbing which denies justice to other by not giving them what is due right. Individualistic leaders who pursued self-gain in the

¹ Ibid, p. xix.

² Adler Mortimer J. (ed.), *Great Books of the Western World*, Vol. 44 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2007), p. 271.

³ Takeshi Hamamura, Karim Bettache, and Yi Xu (eds), *Individualism and Collectivism* (London: Sage Publications Ltd. 2018), p. 365.

⁴ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 4.

administration of justice encourage corruption leading to oppression of the poor by the rich. The partiality in the administration of justice presents the limitation of relying on traditional judicial system. The individualism of some political leaders and various individuals within the community violates commutative justice that ought to prevail in various agreements.

⁵notes that individualism promotes vices that lead to the violation of human rights. It is against the human rights to deny justice to others. Individualistic leaders who ought to ensure human rights and are promoted are the same people who deny liberty, security and equity to the people⁶. Justice should never be applied in a selective manner, lest we violate the human rights.

Isaiah Samuel Bedijo presents how individualism has entrenched itself within the church and hence posing a threat to communitarian life that ought to prevail in his book entitled *The Moral Problem Posed by Individualism in the Church in Africa A Case Study in Nebbi Catholic Diocese in North-Western Uganda*. (Sankt Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 2015). After presenting a general profile of Nebbi Catholic Diocese in North-Western Uganda, S. I. Bedijo focuses on the traditional values of the Alur tribe which contribute to the local building of ecclesial communion. It discusses the meaning of individualism, its expressive forms and factors in the light of the Christian perception of personality and contrasts it with Christian models of communitarian life. The results are several possibilities which can serve to building up the local Church in a moral, spiritual and practical way. Even though the author addresses the issue of individualism and how it affects the African communitarian spirit in the Church, he does not show how it leads to injustice and lack of peace to the entire society. This study aims at exposing how individualism has impacted on justice and peace among the people of Kenya.

The second work relevant to our study is that of Robert N. Bellah, *et al*, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (London: University of California Press, 1985). This work reveals the self-understanding of Americans as a people and as a nation, that explores the traditions Americans use to make sense of themselves and their society. It shows how fierce individualism creates self-reliant heroes and also undermines their capacity for commitment to one another. In this work the key terms that the authors uses are established in a four-page glossary, which, among other things, define the two senses of *individualism* itself: as a belief in the inviolability of the individual; and as a belief that the individual is real, society only an artificial construct. The authors also contrast ‘utilitarian individualism,’ which sees collective action only as a way of protecting self-interests, and ‘expressive individualism,’ the more romantic notion of the individual as a special and intuitive being who may merge with others, or nature, or the cosmos.⁷ Even though the author addresses the issue of individualism, he does not deal with individualism in relation to justice and peace in the secular society, which is the focus of our study.

⁵ UN Cyber School Bus, “Understanding Human Rights,” retrieved from <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/about/understanding.asp> (accessed on 10.1.2021).

⁶ UN Cyber School Bus, “Understanding Human Rights,” retrieved from <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/about/understanding.asp> (accessed on 10.1.2021).

⁷ Cf. Robert N. Bellah, *et al*, *Habits of the Heart Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (London: University of California Press, 1985), 133.

Rwiza N. Richard, *Formation of Christian Conscience in Modern Africa*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001). In this work the author brings out an important factor provoking individualism in the African society. Comparing between rural and urban lifestyle, the author observes that the long cherished African communitarian morality is being eroded by influences of modern society. He particularly notes that the formation of conscience which was once based upon African community values is now giving way to models that detach and push the individual into a polarised world of struggle for individualistic survival. The urban life is bringing up an anonymous 'I' which is weakening the traditional African communitarian 'we' personality. Rwiza observes that: "With urbanization the traditional concept of solidarity is giving way to individualism, values of secularism and personal privacy."⁸ While this work focuses more on the effect of individualism on African community life, it does not extend its analysis on the impact of individualism in relation to justice and peace. This leaves a room for further investigating on whether individualism has any impact on the realization of justice and peace in the African setting.

This paper examines moral response to the corruption of individualism in Kenya. The study methodology adapted is bifocal: social-anthropological and moral-theological. Anthropology is concerned with the study of human societies and cultures and their development. The social-anthropological approach has been employed to check out for embedded cultural values. It was helpful during fieldwork, carried out by means of questionnaire and oral interviews making it possible to gather first-hand information. The moral-theological approach has been used to study the morality of human acts in the light of the Sacred Scripture as the media of divine revelation,⁹ Christian Tradition, and the teachings from official church documents. The Moral theological method has also been used in understanding of justice and peace as values necessary for development and harmonious co-existence of the people. The study also makes use of pertinent theological reflections of individual authors.

2.0 The Consequences of Individualism

Individualisms results to interethnic conflicts, poverty, destruction of human life, Environmental degradation among other effects. Due to the presence of individualism, different ethnic groups develop an attitude that their culture, language and occupations are superior in relation to those of other communities. Provoked by their individualistic leaders, who aim at advancing their selfish political interests, they cause conflicts that end up displacing others from their residences as well as destruction of life and properties.

Due to the presence of individualism, some parts of Kenya have a large number of people who live in poverty. An understanding of poverty is: "a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. Poverty means that the income level from employment is so low that basic human needs can't be

⁸ Richard N. Rwiza, *Formation of Christian Conscience in Modern Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), 28-31.

⁹ Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 18th November 1965: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 817-830, no. 1.

met.”¹⁰ Individualism among the community members violates the principle of preferential option for the poor.¹¹

Individualism has in the past years led to the destruction of human life. This is a violation of the principle of human dignity. This principle is founded on the Sacred Scriptures’ teaching that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God; God created them male and female, equal in dignity, which means equal in self-respect and self-worth. Thus, the human being was created to share by knowledge and love in the life of God and this is the fundamental reason for their dignity.¹²

Conflicts that have been witnessed in Kenya in the past have led to loss of numerous human lives. These conflicts arise from individualistic family members, members of the same ethnic group and from inter-ethnic groups. Poverty among the residents of this geographical area causes the loss of human life, in that some community members cannot afford their basic needs. If only the people of Kenya would be able to overcome individualism, these anti-life factors leading to destruction of human life would come to an end.

Individualistic people in Kenya have contributed to the destruction of the environment through deforestation and overgrazing which leads to soil erosion, and air pollution, among others. The destruction of the environment poses a serious threat to life and to food security; and so, it should be addressed by suppressing individualism, the root cause of many evils.

3.0 Church teaching on communitarian ethic

To have a better understanding of communitarian ethic three other terms will help to clarify: ethic, community and communitarianism. The term ethic means, a set of moral principles that guide the conducts of a given community, people or institution. It is a commonly accepted path of life that regulates choices and actions. A people or community behaves in a certain stable manner because of certain accepted values.¹³ The second term is community. Gyekye presents an understanding of community as particular social settings and networks characterized by sharing an overall way of life. Sharing an overall way of life entails “the existence and acknowledgement of common roles, values, obligations, and meanings or understandings.”¹⁴ The word *community* is also defined in *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics* in terms of commitment to shared values

¹⁰ Cf. “Poverty,” retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/poverty.asp> (accessed on 14.2.2021).

¹¹ It was during the Puebla Conference that the term, “preferential option for the poor” was coined. In their description of the term, the bishops stated that “this option does not imply exclusion of anyone, but it does imply a preference for the poor and a drawing closer to them.” Conference of Latin American Bishops, *Evangelization in Latin America’s Present and Future* (1979), p. 733.

¹² Thomas Massaro, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action* 3rd ed. (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), p. 135.

¹³ *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, “Ethics,” retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethic> (accessed on 19.2.2021).

¹⁴ Gyekye K., *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 43.

by which a group of persons are bound together.¹⁵ This is more elucidated by Lonergan, where he writes that: “A community is not just a number of men within a geographical frontier. It is an achievement of common meaning... Common meaning is potential when there is common field of experience, and to withdraw from that common field is to get out of touch.”¹⁶

The social settings and networks are of different forms and shapes: “thus, the family (both nuclear and extended), clan, village, tribe, city, neighbourhood, nation-state all these are kinds of community.”¹⁷ In this sense the notion of community is understood within a context. A person takes part in various kinds of community such as family, clan, village, tribe and nation-state. Since a person participates in a variety of communities, it would follow that s/he would participate also in a variety of social relationships. According to Bujo the African Understanding of community, the African person lives within an extended family. The togetherness is based on a common with the ancestors who founded the community of the clan or tribe. For him the community is made up also of the living dead, who have originated from the community he founded on earth.¹⁸ The foundations of the moral conduct in an African community, was both theocentric as well as anthropocentric.

Communitarianism is a social and political philosophy that emphasizes the importance of community in the functioning of political life, in the analysis and evaluation of political institutions, and in understanding human identity and well-being.¹⁹ Communitarianism is based on the notion that a person, when born, finds himself or herself not in isolation but among other individuals and thus establishing the relational nature of a person. Communitarianism emphasizes the connection between the individual and the community. It is based upon the belief that a person's social identity and personality are largely molded by community relationships, and it is opposed to individualism.²⁰ Gyekye argues that communitarianism sees the individual as an inherently communal being, embedded in a context of social relationships and interdependence.²¹

Communitarianism according to Benezet Bujo, holds that, no member of any African society can develop outside the community. The understanding of interaction, the individual is an incomplete being who basically depends on the community. on the other hand, the community dissolves without individuals. Individual ceases to exist as a being for himself, so as to become a ‘being’ existing for the community.²² Menkiti supports community spirit by arguing that, in

¹⁵ Henry Clark, “Community,” in John McQuarrie and James Childress (eds.), *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (London, SCM Press Ltd., 1997), pp. 105-106.

¹⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York, The Seabury Press, 1979), p. 79.

¹⁷ Gyekye K., *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, p. 43.

¹⁸ Benezet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 1998), p. 16.

¹⁹ “Communitarianism,” retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/communitarianism> (accessed 19.2.2021).

²⁰ Avineri S., and De-Shalit Avner, *Communitarianism and Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 11.

²¹ Cf. Gyekye K., *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*. p. 42.

²² Benezet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, p. 73.

Africa, the community had priority over the individual. Menkiti distinguishes between Western views, which generally hold that a person is a lone individual, and African views, in which a person is defined “by reference to the enviroining community,” quoting John Mbiti’s statement, “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am,” to support his thesis.²³

Mbiti held that radical communitarianism is based on the assumption that an individual is a person only if she/he belongs to a community and adheres to the rules and rituals of that community. He referred to this arrangement as kinship in traditional African communities, as he noted that, the deep sense of kinship, with all it implies, has been one of the strongest forces in traditional African life. For him, it is the kinship that controls social relationships between people in a given community: it governs marital customs and regulations, and determines the behavior of one individual towards another. It is this sense of kinship that binds the community together and also sets the direction of the community.²⁴ Simon Njuguna also identifies *utuism* (humanness) as the inner power bringing people together in a community. according to him, “for the “I”, to feel the fundamental requirements of the “we”, “us”, “our” and the “other”, the inner guiding principle to the actions would be relational *utuism*.”²⁵

Communities can be divided into: ethno-cultural community and multicultural community. An ethno-cultural community is a community of people who believe themselves to be bound by some intrinsic ties, while a multicultural community is formed when various ethno-cultural communities merge. The bigger the society the more complex it becomes and hence characteristics such as unity, solidarity, justice and cohesion, charity, peace, and respect for law which are manifested in smaller communities such as families or clans dwindle. Individualism as a vice entrenches itself in both ethno-cultural and multicultural communities in Kenya, leading to numerous evils. Individualism among the people of Kenya destroys the kinship fabric that ought to unite the community so that they may be able to coexist in harmony guided by communitarian ethic. In ensuring that basic values in community are restored, communitarianism must be promoted as a remedy to individualism.

3.1 Communitarian Ethic

Historically “ethics” is derived from Greek, *ethiké /ethos*, which means conduct, habit; passion for right action, correct behaviour; a rule, yardstick of human conduct; custom, commonly accepted conduct.²⁶ According to Austin Fagothey, ethics is the practical normative science of the rightness and wrongness of human conduct as known by natural reason.²⁷ We can

²³ Menkiti, I. A., “Person and community in African traditional thought,” in *African Philosophy: An introduction*, (ed). R. A. Wright (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 171-181, p. 171.

²⁴ Mbiti J. S., *African Religions and Philosophies* (New York: Anchor Books, 1970), p. 135.

²⁵ Simon Nguguna, *Philosophy of Utuism* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2020), p. 54.

²⁶ Agnes Umutesi Muhavani, “Ethics and Business: A Proposal for a New Comprehensive Business Model,” in *Mainstreaming Ethics in Higher Education: Research Ethics in Administration, Finance, Education, Environment and Law*, Obiora F. Ike, Justus Mbae, Chidiebere Onyia (eds.) Vol. 1, no. 4 (Geneva: Globethics.net, 2019), p.112.

²⁷ Austin, Fagothey, *Right and Reason Ethics in Theory Practice* (2nd Ed.) (North Carolina: TAN Books, 1959), p. 20.

consider yet another view, that, when narrowly defined according to its original use, ethics is a branch of philosophy that used to study ideal human behavior and ideal ways of being. The approaches to ethics and the meanings of related concepts have varied over time among philosophers and ethicists.²⁸ On the other hand, we have the term *ethic*, which means, a set of moral principles that guide the conducts of a given community, people or institution. It is a commonly accepted path of life that regulates choices and actions. A people or community behaves in a certain stable manner because of certain accepted values.²⁹ Our focus is more on communitarianism as an *ethic* or a *moral principle* that is supposed to guide communities. Communitarian ethic promotes values search as: unity, justice, solidarity, peace, reconciliation, and respect for law.

Basing our argument on Gyekye's communitarian moral and political theory we consider the community as a fundamental human good to be promoted. We advocate a life lived in harmony and in cooperation with others. The communitarian ethic proposes a life of mutual consideration and interdependence. It supports a life in which a person shares in the blessing and fate of the other. It encourages a life that provides a viable framework for the fulfilment of the individual's nature or potential. Gyekye's notion of communitarianism advocates for a life in which the products of the exercise of an individual's talents or endowments are regarded as the assets of the community.³⁰ Communitarian ethic is opposed individualism which advocates selfish gains.

3.1.1 Solidarity

The Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Pope John Paul II states that: the exercise of solidarity within each society is valid when its members recognize one another as persons. According to Pope John Paul II, those who are more influential, because they have a greater share of goods and common services, should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share with them all they possess.³¹

The practice of solidarity is a necessary component of Christian faith. As Pope Benedict writes, "Love of neighbor...consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate

²⁸ Gichure Christine W. *Basic Concepts in Ethics: With an Outline of Different Methods in Contemporary Moral Philosophy* (Nairobi: Focus Books, 1997), pp. 16-17.

²⁹ Merriam Webster Dictionary, "Ethics," retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethic> (accessed on 19.2.2021).

³⁰ Gyekye K., *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 141.

³¹ Ibid, no. 39.

encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, even affecting my feelings and that closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God.”³²

When the Catholic imagination envisions a just and peaceful society, it depicts a situation in which humans exist in right relationship to one another. Within the Catholic imagination, the human good is related to the experience of communities that practice mutual respect and honor, forgiveness and love. Consequently, the Catholic understanding of justice demands the creation of genuine communitarian ethic where belonging, respect, friendship, forgiveness, and love are essential to human well-being. These values are better understood as conditions required for the establishment and flourishing of the human community. Central to the theory of justice in modern Catholic Social teaching is the recognition that human dignity can be realized and protected mainly in community.

Individualism destroys the fabric that joins the society together and as a result the poor and the weak remain with no one to promote them. It is through the restoration of community that solidarity would be restored. This ethic reminds us that we are all one family in the world. Building a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential by respecting each other's dignity, rights and responsibilities makes the world a better place to live.³³ Solidarity in Catholic Social teaching must be understood as more than an acknowledgement of empirical interdependence. Instead, it is a moral imperative generated by a communitarian outlook that challenges liberal individualism.

3.1.2 Love

When God created people, He endowed them with his own image. In the ancient world an image was believed to carry the essence of that which it represented.³⁴ To argue that humans are in the image of God is to recognize the special qualities of human nature which allow God to be made manifest in humans. The moral implications of the doctrine of *Imago Dei* are apparent in the fact that if humans are to love God, then humans must love other humans, as each is an expression of God.³⁵ This theology promotes the communitarian ethic where people are called to co-exist in love and harmony. Contrary to this, community members motivated by individualism go against the theology of *Imago Dei*, because they fail to manifest the love of God to others while they seek self-gains. Thomas Merton argues that, “To say that I am made in the image of God is to say that love is the reason for my existence, for God is love. Love is my true identity. Selflessness is my true self. Love is my true character. Love is my name.”³⁶

³² Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25 December 2005): AAS 98 (2006), 232-240, nos. 16, 18.

³³ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987): AAS 8 (1988), 513-586, no. 39.

³⁴ John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, & Mark W. Chavalas, *The I.V.P Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997), p. 29.

³⁵ Michelle Ule, “History Real Life and Faith,” retrieved from <https://www.michelleule.com/> (accessed on 25.2.2021).

³⁶ Thomas Merton, *The New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961), p. 60.

3.1.3 Community

Individualism among the community members in Kenya challenges the invitation to follow the example of unity in trinity. All in the society are called to avoid isolated life and instead be concerned of the needs of others. Human community should model trinitarian community and the divine perichoresis. It should be a community of inclusion, characterized by unity and diversity, and unity in diversity.³⁷ The doctrine of the Trinity stresses the relational character of personhood over and against the reduction of personhood to individual self-consciousness, and also emphasizes the uniqueness and integrity of personhood over and against the reduction of personhood to a product of social relations.

Basing ourselves on the above stated invitation by Christ to maintain unity and to love one another, we can then conclude that individualism possess a threat to this divine call to communion. It is through community life that values such as justice, peace and other moral values can be enhanced and promoted. In the following subtitle we shall look at Pauline teaching on the need for unity in a community and how individuals are called to complement each other.

4.0 Moral theological recommendations to end the corruption of individualism in society

Role of the church

The section presents the means through which the church can use to put to end individualism. These means include promotion of Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, building strong and viable small Christian communities, educating Christians, and continual Christian moral formation.

The Church as an institution has an obligation to ensure that its members live in peace, love and harmony with one another. This model acknowledges that the Church needs to be structured as an organized community, with recognised officials to direct and guide it, to preside over worship, to determine the limits of dissent, and to represent the community in an official manner.³⁸

There is also need for the promotion of Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. Through this organ the church hopes to better herself in fulfilling the mission given to her by Christ in promoting both human and spiritual development of people. These programmes should be directed towards making individuals more conscious of requirements of justice in their own lives and continue to propagate how these principles of justice can be applied in all areas of human life and this is obviously understood. The commission continues noting that, "...a real effort by

³⁷ Anne Hunt, *What are They Saying About Trinity?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), p. 13.

³⁸ Samuel Bedijo, *The Moral Problem Posed by Individualism in the Church in Africa: A case Study in Nebbi Catholic Diocese in North-West Uganda* (Sankt Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 2015), p. 176.

the individual members of the community must be made to practice justice towards each other, develop the ideals of social justice.”³⁹

Since the church has already established a commission that deals with issues of justice, we propose that this commission be strengthened in all the parishes and the outstations to collaborate with the agents of evangelization on this noble mission. The members of this commission should be well trained on church social teachings so that they may exercise their duty according to the proper teachings of the Church.

The church social doctrine must become an integral part of the ongoing formation of the lay faithful. This is possible through lay ecclesial associations that respond to the church teaching and faith. “The various specialized associations that gather people together in the name of their Christian vocation and mission within a particular professional or cultural field; have a precious role to play in forming mature Christians.”⁴⁰

Taking into consideration the spirit and the task of the Small Christians Communities in Kenya, it can be a good avenue for the promotion of community, where justice and peace can be natured among members. Through frequent coming together of Small Christian Community members, unity among them will be promoted and hence able to overcome individualism, and instead adopt community that values justice and peace.

Since all Christians have become by rebirth of water and the Holy Spirit a new creature so that they should be called and should be children of God, they have a right to a Christian education.⁴¹ It therefore remains the obligation of both church authorities as well as all the baptized to take part in educating the community on the dangers of individualism and instead invite them to embrace a communitarian ethic. The education on these temporal issues should be imparted through catechesis, homilies, seminars, and workshops. The Christians within Kenya should also serve as witnesses. They should become the salt of the earth wherever they are. The church should also contribute to the formation of the conscience of the society through civic education, and through timely prophetic voice.

Formation does not end with basic catechesis as for the common believer; nor in the classroom as for those in religious and clerical training. The laity are to be reinvigorated through discussions on topics which can challenge them with insights that connect faith with daily living.⁴² The laity on-going formation should also be advanced through homilies, workshops, and civic education. With the on-going formation they will be able to overcome individualism and opt for a communitarian way of life. The formation of a good conscience is another fundamental element of Christian moral teaching that can help in ending individualism as well as any other evil act.

³⁹ KCCB, “About Justice and Peace Commission,” retrieved from <http://www.cjpc.kccb.or.ke/about-cjpc/> (accessed on 19.3.2021).

⁴⁰ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, p. 296.

⁴¹ Vatican Council II, Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis* 28 October 1965: AAS 58 (1966), 713-727, no. 2.

⁴² Cf. Samuel Bedijo, *The Moral Problem Posed by Individualism in the Church in Africa A case Study in Nebbi Catholic Diocese in North-West Uganda*, p. 233.

Role of the Community

The community has a significant contribution in ending individualism. The Kenyan community having learned the need to maintain, justice and peace, will end individualism that motivates many to go against these two values. The commission should also promote communities where all in the society could coexist in peace.

Further, as a way of promoting community and getting rid of individualism, we recommend the establishment of numerous community organizations aimed at promoting cohesion among the members of the society. Community organization or Community Based Organization refers to groupings aimed at making desired improvements to a community's social health, well-being and overall functioning. Community organization occurs in geographically, psychosocially, culturally, spiritually, and/or digitally bounded communities.

The family should be promoted to ensure that its members will learn to overcome individualism and instead accommodate their neighbors as an extension of their families. The community should be helped to embrace love for neighbour, which springs from the divine love, as the foundation on which each human community builds its social solidarity and peace.

To achieve a long-lasting cohesion among the community members living in Kenya, several stake-holders are expected to initiate dialogue, leading to reconciliation. The players in this mission should include the government agents, religious leaders, community leaders as well as each individual. Through reconciliation every community member will be able to live in harmony with others, keeping peace, and ensuring justice to all. This approach will help in promoting a viable community.

The Role of the Government in Ending Individualism

The government has a vital role to play through policy making, legislation, the judiciary, and school education. Kenya's system of governance falls under two governments, namely, the national and local (County) governments. The two governments work hand in hand in ensuring that development is realised. The two governments have the obligations of formulating and implementation of policies of different kinds that can help in ending individualism as well as promoting a communitarian ethic. It is important that, both the national and county governments should formulate policies that will end any individualistic dealings. They should come up with policies that will help in stopping acts such as: corruption, land grabbing, injustices, violence, cattle rustling, and oppression that affect the people of Kenya.

In ensuring that we promote the communitarian ethic, and to end individualism, the Kenyan government needs to include in the school curriculum the education about human rights. Curriculum refers to a matter of Knowledge on what is desirable that the learners should be introduced to.⁴³ Through this the learners will come to treasure values such as community, justice, peace, solidarity, citizenship, human fraternity, and equity.

⁴³ T. W. Moore, *Philosophy of Education: An Introduction*, Vol. 14 (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2010), p. 25.

Bibliography

- “Communitarianism.” Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/communitarianism> (Accessed 19.2.2021).
- “Community Organization for Social Welfare,” retrieved from <http://christcollegemsw.blogspot.com/2008/03/community-organisation-notes.html> (accessed on 3.4.2021).
- “Degradation,” retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/degradation> (accessed on 12.2.2021).
- “Family,” retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/family> (accessed on 14.2.2021).
- “Migration Trends,” retrieved from <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/factbook-2015-6-en.pdf?expires=1620983845&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=D72F10EBF8FE9910DA8F50AD3AEEC5D> (accessed on 14.5.2021).
- “Natural resources,” retrieved from <https://www.yourdictionary.com/natural-resource> (accessed on 14.5.2021).
- “Policy” retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy> (accessed on 29.3.2021).
- “Poverty,” retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/poverty.asp> (accessed on 14.2.2021).
- “Reconciliation.” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reconciliation> (Accessed 30 March 2021).
- “Semi-Arid climate,” retrieved from <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=K%C3%B6ppen+climate+classification+> (accessed 15.2.2021).
- “Slavery” retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/slavery> (accessed on 18.5.2021).
- “The National Land Policy,” retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC163862/> (accessed 13.2.2121).
- Adler, Mortimer J. (ed.), *Great Books of the Western World*, Vol. 44, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2007.
- Avineri, S. and De-Shalit, Avner, *Communitarianism and Individualism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Barden, Garrett. & Murphy Timothy, “Law and Justice in Community,” retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263385968_Ethics_Politics_and_Types_of_Justice (accessed on 26.4.2020).
- Bedijo, Samuel, *The Moral Problem Posed by Individualism in the Church in East Africa: A Case Study in Nebbi Catholic Diocese in North-Western Uganda*, Sankt Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 2015.

- Bellah, Robert *et al.*, *Habits of the Heart*, 2nd ed., California: University of California Press, 1996.
- Bellah, Robert Neelly, et al. *Habits of the heart: individualism and commitment in American life: updated edition with a new introduction*. Univ of California Press, 1996.
- Benedict XVI, Address to the diplomatic corps at the Vatican, 7 January 2008, retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080107_diplomatic-corps.html (accessed on 28.3.2021).
- Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25 December 2005): AAS 98 (2006), 232-240.
- Bujo, Bénédet, “The Awakening of a Systematic and Authentically Africa Thought,” in *African Theology, the Contribution of the Pioneers*, Vol. 1, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2003, pp. 107-149.
- Bujo, Bénédet, *Plea for Change of Models for Marriage*, Nairobi: Paulines publications Africa, 2009.
- Bujo, Bénédet. *The Ethical Dimension of community: The African Model and the Dialogue Between North and South*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998.
- Catholic Charities Office for Social Justice, “Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching,” retrieved from www.cctwincities.org/advocacy (accessed on 11.3.2021).
- Catholic Dictionary*. “Justice,” retrieved from <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/index.cfm?id=34423> (accessed 25.1.2021).
- Commission on Revenue Allocation, *Functions of County Government*, retrieved from <https://www.crakenya.org/functions-of-county-government/> (accessed 29.11.2020).
- Conference of Latin American Bishops, *Evangelization in Latin America's Present and Future* (1979), retrieved from <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/conference-latin-american-bishops-celam> (accessed on 9.6.2021).
- Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, *The Foundation of Religious Life*, retrieved from <https://cmswr.org/about/religious-life/> (accessed on 24.2.2021).
- County Government of Nyandarua, “County Fiscal Strategy Paper for 2019/2020 and the Medium Term, Actualizing Nyandarua County Social-Economic Transformative Agenda,” retrieved from <http://www.nyandarua.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FINAL-DRAFT-CFSP-2019-FOR-PUBLIC-PARTICIPATION.pdf> (accessed 28.11.2020).
- Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “moiety,” retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/moiety-system> (accessed on 22.12.2020).
- Ethnicity and Race*, retrieved from <https://quizlet.com/129376418/chapter-11-ethnicity-and-race-flash-cards/> (accessed on 5.5.2021).
- Fagothey, Austin, *Right and Reason Ethics in Theory Practice*, 2nd ed., North Carolina: TAN Books, 1959.

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t3003>

- Francis, 2017 *World Day of Peace Message*, retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html (accessed on 5.4.2021).
- Frank, Sheed, “*Theology and Sanity*,” retrieved from <http://Ignatiusinsight.com>, (accessed on 23.2.2021).
- Gichure, W. Christine, *Basic Concepts in Ethics: With an Outline of Different Methods in Contemporary Moral Philosophy*, Nairobi: Focus Books, 1997.
- Gyekye, K. *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Hamamura, Takeshi. Bettache Karim. and Yi Xu (eds.), *Individualism and Collectivism*, London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2018.
- Hamamura, Takeshi. Karim Bettache and Yi Xu (eds.), *Individualism and Collectivism*, London: Sage Publications Ltd. 2018, pp. 365-382.
- Hunt, Anne, *What are They Saying About Trinity?* New York: Paulist Press, 1998.
- Ikenna, L. Umeanolue, *Critique against Social Injustice in the Book of Amos: Its Relevance to Development in Nigeria*, retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v19i2.10> (accessed on 1.3.2021).
- Imago Dei*, retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/theogloss/imago-body.html> (accessed on 27.2.2021).
- John Paul II. Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei Socialis* (30 December 1987): AAS 8 (1988), 513-586.
- Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Justice and Peace Commission*, retrieved from <https://www.kccb.or.ke/home/commission/10-the-catholic-justice-and-peace-commission/> (accessed on 27/1/2020).
- KHRC. retrieved from. <https://www.khrc.or.ke/mobile-publications/civil-political-rights/10-recurrent-ethnic-violence-and-claims-of-communities-arming-ahead-of-the-2012-general-elections/file.html> (accessed 22.12.2020).
- Massaro, Thomas, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action* (ed.), London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.
- Mbiti, J. S, *African Religions and Philosophies*, New York: Anchor Books, 1969.
- Menkiti, I. A., “Person and community in African traditional thought,” in *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, (ed.), R. A. Wright, Lanham: University Press of America, 1984, pp. 171-181.
- Merriam Webster Dictionary*, “Ethics,” retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethic> (accessed on 19.2.2021).
- Merton, Thomas, *The New Seeds of Contemplation*, New York: Abbey of Gethsemani, Inc., 1961.

- Moore, T. W. *Philosophy of Education: An Introduction*, Vol. 14, New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2010.
- Muhavani, Umutesi Agnes, “Ethics and Business: A Proposal for a New Comprehensive Business Model,” in *Mainstreaming Ethics in Higher Education: Research Ethics in Administration, Finance, Education, Environment and Law*, Obiora F. Ike, Justus Mbae, Chidiebere Onyia (ds.), Vol. 1, no. 4, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2019, pp. 109-132.
- Murray, G. Ross, *Community Organization*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1955.
- National Geographic, “Wild-life Conservation,” retrieved from <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/wildlife-conservation/> (Accessed on 15.5.2021).
- Njuguna, W. Simon, *Philosophy of Utuism*, Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2020.
- Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March, 1967): AAS 59 (1967), 290- 291.
- Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2004.
- Pontifical Council for the Family, *Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Population Trends*, (1994), retrieved from <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/ethical-and-pastoral-dimensions-of-population-trends-2397> (accessed 15.2.2021).
- Rawls, John, “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical,” in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 3, Summer: Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 223-251.
- Rawls, John, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.
- Rwiza, N. Richard, “African Christian Morality: Challenges to Religion in Africa in Light of Vatican II Council,” in *Challenges to Religion in Africa in Light of Vatican Council II: Essays in Honour of Charles Nyamiti*, Peter Gichure, Frederick Wanjara, Nicholous Segeja (Eds.), Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2020, pp. 83-99.
- Rwiza, N. Richard, *Formation of Christian Conscience in Modern Africa*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001.
- Ule Michelle, “History Real Life and Faith,” retrieved from <https://www.michelleule.com/> (accessed on 25.2.2021).
- UN Cyber School Bus, “Understanding Human Rights,” retrieved from <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/about/understanding.asp> (accessed on 10.1.2021).
- Vatican Council II. Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis* 28 October 1965: AAS 58 (1966), 713-727.
- Vatican Council II. Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* 8 November 1965: AAS 58 (1966), 817–35
- Walton, H. John. Victor, H. Matthews, & Chavalas Mark W. *The I.V.P Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, Downers Grove Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997.